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ABSTRACT

The genesis of the Ocean Beach, California, Community School is described in this volume by three of the participants in its formation. A grassroots effort, the school was started amidst a certain degree of controversy and resistance from already established community organizations. The authors describe the processes they went through to gather broader support for the idea, to assess community needs, to form and work with a community education advisory council, to put together an educational program, and to evaluate the community school. One chapter, written by the community school director, describes the political and interpersonal problems that had to be resolved to get the program running smoothly. (DS)

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the GRASS ROOTS alternative

A CITIZENS' APPROACH TO COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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A CITIZENS' APPROACH TO COMMUNITY EDUCATION

WRITTEN BY KATIE ELSBREE – DENNY DOYLE – LOVERNE BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY PAT ZIEBARTH

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This brief history of the beginnings of the

OCEAN BEACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

is gratefully dedicated to the members of the
Ad Hoc Committee
whose solidarity and ceaseless endeavor made
the dream come
true:

And our staunch supporters in Community Education,
Dr. Wayne Robbins
Dr. Jim Craig Ms. Evonne Schulze

FOREWORD

For years I could not figure out what all the commotion was about—all the meetings my friend Katie was off to, all the breathless talk of community and education, organizing and grass-roots, principals and janitors. After reading this handbook I finally know. And I'm impressed. For a number of reasons.

I'm impressed first of all that the Ocean Beach program of community education was built from the bottom up. Valuable as they are, most such efforts are usually handed from the top down.

I'm impressed second of all with the quality of this handbook describing their experience. It's actually readable. This handbook is about real people with actual problems who tackled these problems and made mistakes. That the authors were willing to share with us not just their triumphs but their failures makes them unique in the annals of handbook writing. And credible. I believe them because everything didn't go right. Sometimes they blew it. Just like me.

In the end what impresses me most is the overall philosophy of a movement incorporating the Ocean Beach experience. The notion that schools ought to do more than teach reading, writing and new math from 8 to 3 seems so obvious, so uncontroversial. Yet as Katie and her friends discovered this notion is anything *but* uncontroversial. Which is tragic. Because there are not just obvious, practical benefits to making more intensive use of our school buildings. Even more important is an intangible benefit: that of community. Our world is increasingly one of single parents, wary kids and lonely old folks who mingle only at the 7-11, if there. Day-to-day this life can be desperate enough. Long-range it puts in question our very ability to live together, work together and take care of each other. A former teacher of mine, Arthur Morgan, once wrote that, "Through the ages family and community have been the chief agencies for transmitting human culture from generation to generation. Character is largely fixed in early life. As children see parents and neighbors in many relationships and activities, what they learn becomes second nature. The mutual confidence and respect, cooperation, integrity, and sharing of burdens of the community are the foundations of civilization. Where community dies these qualities weaken."

This is the danger we face. To survive more than physically we must learn skills of community once taught in families, neighborhoods and soda fountains. By making our schools such a place we'll do more than make cost-effective use of buildings. As a gathering place for all ages our schools will become an investment in a humane future. A place where all of us learn to live together. This is what's happened in Ocean Beach. The handbook you're about to read is an unusually good guide to that process. I'm glad it was written.

Ralph Keyes
October, 1977

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CHAPTER ONE:

THE EMPTY SCHOOL

"Public school facilities should be used as community centers for the integration of the American community and the encouragement of family participation in wholesome character-building activities conducive to good citizenship. The Association should urge state associations to initiate legislation whenever necessary to authorize the wider use of public school facilities for community purposes under provisions giving local boards authority to determine, regulate and maintain such programs."— National School Board Association.

There is no villain in this "adventure" story. Neither are there any special heroes or heroines, since we all worked together to bring our happy ending about.

As for the citadel we stormed, you have one just like it, not far from where

you live. It's called an elementary school, and it has a genuine moat around it—one dug through many years of laws, a philosophy which fostered separation of school and community, and, at its widest and muddiest part, a pervading apathy.

The bridge we threw across our moat is called a Community School. In this book we want to tell you how we did it, and how you, too, can achieve maximum use of the building which costs you so many tax dollars and sits empty so much of the time.

Let's start by telling you a little of the place we live in.

Ocean Beach is a mile-square area, with about 19,000 inhabitants, lying completely within the city boundaries of San Diego, California. As its un-original name makes clear, it is on the ocean. The early-day Indians made regular visits to our beach to gather mussels. Spanish and American settlers also found it an easy journey and would bring out wagonloads of food, water, children and fishing gear for weekend visits. Two hundred years later, we are still the place where San Diego families come to build sand castles on Saturday afternoon.

Not picturesque enough to attract the tourist, not near enough to either wharf or railroad to support an industry, Ocean Beach lived for many decades in happy semi-oblivion.

The sixties and the Viet Nam War changed our town, just as they did yours. San Diego housing grew scarce and rents skyrocketed. Because Ocean Beach still had some small beach cottages which could be rented year-round for a moderate price, we acquired a higher-than-average ratio of pensioned old and unaffluent young. Students under the G.I. bill, students not under the bill but working their way through college, and retired military, professional and technical people found themselves neighbors.

These newcomers were often activists, not always on the same side. By the mid-sixties, Ocean Beach was known as the community that did things for itself and let City administrators know when it felt unfairly treated.

Our pier, for instance. It's the longest pier on the West Coast and a delight to all, but when you come up over Narragansett Hill and look down you see something strange: The crossbar which gives it the T-shape is twice as long on the south end as on the north. There's a reason and it has to do with "doing for ourselves." In 1966, the State and City found the pier costing more money than they had available, and to stay within the budget both ends of the crossbar were shortened from the original design. But O.B. fishermen wanted to reach a kelp bed to the south where, presumably, all the big fish were waiting. So the townspeople raised many thousands of dollars, a lot of it in small change dropped into pickle jars in local stores, to extend the south bar to its designed length.

On a more serious level: When the drug culture hit our beach, our church and street people worked together to set up a successful crisis clinic, called the "In Between" because it was first located in a storefront between two bars; and this clinic, after a stormy and controversial first year, became a respected part of the community as Ocean Beach Community Services.

When the City of San Diego Planning Department came up with a plan for O.B.'s future development which in part replaced our cheap rentals with high-rise condominiums, enough people protested to effect a change. Since then a precedent has been set: the City conducted an election which gave us our own local planning board composed entirely of citizens chosen by majority vote.

Activism engenders public gatherings. Soon we were up against a problem we didn't seem able to solve—the lamentable lack of meeting rooms in our community. We needed small rooms for committees to meet in regularly and large rooms for special meetings just now and then.

But the only places available were two rooms in the Recreation Center, and these were booked months ahead by established organizations which seemed never to cancel. When any of us had a community problem to discuss with more than four or five others, we had to meet on the pier or the jetty, or sit for long hours in the one local restaurant that was open evenings, buying more coffee and doughnuts than we wanted or could afford, just to justify keeping the tables out of circulation.

This was all right if we just wanted to talk amiably, but we could hardly carry on forceful arguments in public; and argument, of course, is an essential ingredient in any democratic decision.

So, early in the summer of 1974, we began to cast long looks at the empty Ocean Beach Elementary School.

We came toward the school from many directions.

First, there were the young men and women who had formed a cooperative child-care project. Denny Doyle was in this co-op. As the single father of a four-year-old son Erin, he wanted child care that was creative as well as custodial. There were many young parents willing to work on this project and a surprisingly large number of them were fathers. But as the number of children and workers outgrew the square footage of the available homes, they were desperate for an alternative meeting place.

Katie Elsbree was the mother of two elementary school children. She was a dedicated worker in Early Childhood Education and other school programs. She had just completed a year's work as a teacher's aide in the Ocean Beach school and in that capacity had set up and developed a Learning Center, which also functions as the school library. Katie was concerned about crowded class-

room conditions and disturbed by the lack of communication between parents and administration and the general apathy that prevailed on this subject. She wanted to open the school to more volunteers. She also wanted to bring the young parents of the community something she felt they wanted and needed—classes in positive parenting.

Unfortunately, a rigid administration in the local school and general City-wide rules about how the building could or could not be used stood in the way of these plans.

Retired people—Bernadine Lewis, for instance—were interested in any educational or cultural classes which could be reached by foot or by bus without transferring. Until a few years earlier, some classes had been available through local Adult Education at Pt. Loma High School, two miles from O.B. but easily reached by bus, and hikeable or bikeable if you don't mind the hill. Transfer of adult education from the city schools to the community college program wiped out these classes.

We had people willing to teach, and lots of people willing to learn, but we just couldn't find a place to get them together!

Then there were the dancers and poets, of whom Nancy Young was a very articulate representative; people like Pauline Sneed who wanted to start a Little Theatre; artists, led by Betty Bish, who wanted places to exhibit and perhaps sell their works. There were the people genuinely concerned about the educational system, including the problems of segregation, and the amount of learning a child could absorb when the classroom was too crowded. There were those who felt our greatest need was some communal meeting-place where all the factions of O.B. could come together in an effective whole. And all of us, separately at that time, walked around the school, and looked at it, standing empty and the victim of vandals, and wondered just what we could do to open it.

We had heard about community education. We knew that the community school process could free a vast warehouse of personal talent to work for the public good. We knew this same school could serve as an umbrella for many services our town wanted and needed. We were convinced, furthermore, that community education was the coming thing.

The question—would it ever be coming to us?

Not soon, we thought. Although the State of California had authorized school districts to collect a Community Services tax, and our District actually did, the money had always been used for swimming pools, tennis courts, noon-duty attendants, and other things conducive to the physical fitness and security of the young. Board representatives had many times stated that this was the most proper use of such tax money.

So LoVerne Brown told nostalgic stories of the elementary school in her home town of Seldovia, Alaska, a building which was the center of everything that happened in that village—dances, weddings, elections, health clinics, box socials, and political soap-boxing. And we all said, "That's the way elementary schools should be," and we understood—though we didn't yield to—the frustration that made youngsters throw stones through the windows of that useless building.

Then something happened, but without fanfare, so it took a while before we heard about it. The Board of Education chose six schools in our District to serve as "pilots" in community education for an unspecified trial period.

Our school was not considered, ostensibly because the principal then at the school and our area's representative to the Board of Education both subscribed to the idea that physical fitness installations were more important goals.

Awareness of the possibility of a community school in Ocean Beach came early in 1975.

Katie Elsbree, not then acquainted with the child care project people, attended a meeting on alternative education at which her friend Ralph Keyes was a speaker. Also speaking was Evonne Schulze, a dynamic woman who was in charge of the six new community schools. Evonne's remarks led Katie to believe we might somehow persuade the Board of Education to give us a community school in our area if we wanted to work hard to get it. About the same time, Rick and Shari of the child care project met Evonne through a friend, and were told by her that the community school umbrella would serve admirably as a shelter for their endeavor.

So Katie and the child care project people got together to discuss what obviously was the bridge across the moat we had all been looking for. But how could we persuade the Board to build that bridge? They had already passed us over, and carefully divided the money available among the schools already named. Could we pursuade them to reapportion the money so we could come in, too? Could we make them see how much we needed it? If they did see, could we get it going by the time next year's classes started?

"Let's try," we decided. So then and there—in the late summer of 1975—we appointed ourselves an Ad Hoc Committee to accomplish this goal.

And, because we weren't sure what results would come of it, and perhaps because we feared that people who understood the rigidity of the school structure would only scoff at our plans, we invited to our first meetings only our own circle of friends and a few close neighbors.

This was our first mistake. We should have known better. Some years earlier a group calling itself the Ocean Beach Town Council had started out as a committee composed entirely of businessmen, and has yet to shed the "right wing" image projected by its first public meeting.

We, with as little justification, were as immediately cast in a "left wing" category.

So there we were, the Ocean Beach Town Council on the right, the Ad Hoc Committee for a Community School in Ocean Beach on the left, and the rest of the town loftily straddling an imaginary fence between us.

We had to pull them off, one by one, and it took a lot of energy that might better have been spent elsewhere.

So, when you start your project, remember Rule Number #1:

INVOLVE AS MANY ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS POSSIBLE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE!

CHAPTER TWO:

GETTING GOING

"The Commission recommends that States encourage and assist local education agencies, especially those in large urban centers, in creating community schools which would include such elements as (a) close liaison with the involvement of parents and other citizens; (b) extended availability—nights, weekends and summers—school facilities for use of youth and adults in educational, recreational and other neighborhood activities; (c) cooperation with other community social agencies; and (d) recruitment and use of community social agencies and volunteers as classroom aides, hall monitors, library and clerical workers and for other appropriate duties."—The President's Commission on School Finance.

You who are reading this book are not likely to face the particular problem which caused us the most trouble. The efforts and accomplishments of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation have by now successfully convinced most areas of the country that an elementary school, used to the maximum, can pro-

duce savings as well as enrichment. In Ocean Beach, in the fall of 1975, ignorance on this subject was widespread.

When our Ad Hoc Committee met, in swift succession, with Evonne Schulze, Dr. Wayne Robbins, Dr. Jim Craig and Dr. Emmanuel Sawyers, they all told us: "It is important that you touch base with your principal, teachers and PTA as soon as possible. The principal is responsible for your school and he has the right to know your plans to enlarge its role in the community process. And you need the teachers and the PTA on your side, or you'll get nowhere."

Easier said than done, though! Ocean Beach Elementary School started the 1975-76 school year with a new principal, a fine administrator who, however, admitted to us much later that he knew nothing about community education until we burst upon him, and even after that first meeting had no expectation that our plans would really come to anything. He also confided, again much later, that we did not seem to him at first glance to represent the "more desirable" elements of the community. (We interpreted this to mean we did not look like the parents of Dick and Jane.)

For these reasons, he politely and effectively stonewalled when we tried to set up an informational session with the teachers. "Later," he kept telling us. And later it certainly was; some teachers claim they did not know we existed until our first money-making project, a circus complete with elephant, started setting up a tent on the playground.

A general misconception among the teachers was inspired, it seems, by the fear that our program would in some way displace or at least downgrade the existing K-6 system. We were forbidden to talk to them and they did not wish to cross the moat to talk to us. And, although as we write this our community services specialist Alan Someck is smiling over a vase of flowers and a note of appreciation from these same teachers, it was a long haul before we could communicate with them.

Our attempts to enlist the PTA on our side were equally unsuccessful. This was more alarming, because many of us had worked long years with PTA in one capacity or another, and we knew its proud history as a protest organization which had fought a long battle for recognition by the school system. Furthermore, the national PTA, in 1972 and again in 1974, had commended the community school concept by a lengthy resolution which ended with the recommendation that

"... It is therefore, desirable that PTA's at every level work to promote and develop the Community School program."

We presumed this resolution had been distributed to all branches, in-

cluding the one in Ocean Beach. Apparently it had not, and the Board of Directors would have nothing to do with our project.

One trouble was that the Board confused us with a local "alternative" school which had operated privately in our town for several years. There was some justification for this confusion. The "alternative" school, known locally as the "free school," had actually incorporated as a non-profit entity as "Ocean Beach Community School." More, some of our Ad Hoc Committee had either taught there, sent their children to some of the classes, or both. Board members therefore were of the opinion that we were "free school" people scheming to take over control of elementary education. When, after our first abortive attempt to talk to them failed dismally, we sent a letter asking that they assign a representative to our committee, they replied they were "too busy." (We were told later that they did not expect anything to happen and so did not think they needed a watch-dog in our midst.)

We struck out with the non-teaching staff of the school, too. The secretaries, adopting the attitude of the principal, were politely indifferent, but the head custodian took a dislike to what he considered an invasion by radical elements (he, too, mistook us for the "free" school) and transferred to another area rather than open the door to our meetings.

Also on the advice of our friends in Administration, we set out to involve as many community organizations as we could in our effort; but here again we were tripped up by the prevailing ignorance on community education. Nobody actually showed animosity but it was all a little as if we had asked them to approve a projected flight in an UFO—some were willing to endorse our effort, but no one wanted to sign up for the tour. When we pressed for representatives to work with us, they tended to name some one already on our committee or a close friend of someone who was. Since the organization these appointees were supposed to represent never asked them to report or advised them how to vote or indeed showed any interest at all in what they did when they came to our meetings, they remained part of our original group and thought and acted accordingly. So, weeks later, although we had token representation from some organizations, we were still essentially the same people, a lot of us wearing two hats while we cast our one vote.

We should note here that there were two exceptions. The Ocean Beach Community Services, which evolved from the "In-Between," provided the good services of Gloria Goldberg, who among other things composed our bylaws and helped set up our committee structure; and the Ocean Beach Town Council, after a little prodding, assigned Dr. Robert Long and Bob Miller to work with us, and they really did.

And we had one shining success: Our Board of Education representative, Julie Fisher, met with us and promised to put aside her own priorities to support our project if and when it reached the Board's attention.

We continued to receive strong support from the District people concerned with community education; Evonne Schulze and Jim Craig spent many hours with us.

So we started to work. We were an inexperienced but very energetic committee. LoVerne Brown, who came to our first meeting in September as a friend and neighbor of Katie, was impressed by the way everyone was charging ahead.

We tried to structure ourselves, in a free-and-easy way; and we worked out operating bylaws, although we had become a full-fledged Council before they were finally approved.

One thing that baffled us was when to schedule our meetings. Some of our people went to school (university or junior college classes) on Tuesdays, others on Thursdays. PTA met on Tuesday, O.B. Planning on Wednesday, O.B. Town Council on Thursday. The room which had been assigned to us to meet in (usually the cafeteria) was not available on Friday, and Monday was out because of other school-related meetings which some of our members also attended. We complicated this further by meeting once every week!

We finally settled on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays, so all of the people could attend a meeting every two weeks. This caused a problem because no one could remember which night was which. People were always turning up on Thursday to vote on something that had been decided on Tuesday, or coming in Tuesday night to find a candidate for City Council holding forth to a handful of constituents. After we became a Council and got some programs going, people who came to our meeting-room on the wrong Tuesday found a dream-class going on; and dreams being the stuff that community schools are made of, they would sit there sometimes for quite a while before they realized it wasn't us!

We recommend that you find a meeting time, preferably not oftener than once a month, and stick to it; more, that you have it posted on a community bulletin board, so anyone who wants to come will know when and where. That's what we are going to do next fall, when we reorganize our Council and thereby consolidate a lot of separate school-related groups into one big one.

The only other things in our bylaws which were not completely standard were the chairmanship (frequency of change) and the qualifications for voting.

One of the very unusual things about the people we had assembled were the large number who had some training in this sort of thing. They could conduct a meeting with ease, knew Roberts' Rules of Order by heart, and could get

through even a controversial agenda before the janitor called time on us.

Any one of these persons could have chaired us through our first year with no trouble. We didn't do this because we had a real passion for democracy. We wanted everyone to have a turn at leadership, and so we changed chairpersons every meeting at first, later settling to once a month when we found some people were dropping out just before the job reached them.

Changing chairpersons has a lot of merit, for the reason cited, and is certainly recommended if you have enough people who want to do it. On the other hand, a competent chairperson who can keep the meeting moving, the agenda straight and the necessary rules of order generally in mind, doesn't come along every day. If you find one like that, it might be well to appoint a vice-chairperson to work with him or her for as many weeks as needed; the new chairperson in turn can train a replacement.

Who should have the right to vote was another problem we grappled with for several sessions. Membership by dues payment was never considered. We wanted the poorest member of the community to be able to express an opinion in the only way that counts—by casting a ballot. We felt that anyone interested enough to attend a meeting should be allowed to vote at it; but there was some fear expressed that if voting were open to anyone who came, the opposition (we were still conscious of this) might one day stack the meeting and vote us and our community school plans out of existence.

We considered limiting voting privileges to persons who had attended three consecutive meetings prior to the night of vote. We discarded this idea because it might disenfranchise a loyal worker who happened to be ill just prior to a really important decision.

Finally we decided that the only valid relationship between us and the rest of O.B. was trust. We voted for an open-ended membership—if you come, you vote—and took our chances. At the same time we asked our longtime members not to caucus beforehand—there is always a temptation to do this—but to attend each meeting free and willing to cast a vote based on the facts presented. The community and our members from the original group have kept faith with us. No meeting has ever been stacked.

In our opinion, open-ended membership is the only way to go. It's risky, maybe, but it's fair; and it leaves the door open for new ideas. We recommend it to you.

Having determined the most troublesome of our bylaws, we began to set up task forces to tackle the problems at hand. Everyone was on at least one committee. Here, again, our desire to have every member playing a significant role

ran us into trouble. Some of our original group were not equal to this burst of activity and we burned out a lot of people who might have lasted with us longer had they been worked less arduously. We came at last to recognize that many people who can contribute significantly to wise decision-making and provided good representation to the community could not, because of health, handicaps or other commitments, maintain the pace at which we were leading the march. Were we to do it again, we would meet less often; have fewer people on each task-force (just telephoning people about meetings took a lot of time); and generally allow everyone a little rest between assignments. We would also give the chairpersons of the task forces more power so that every detail did not require the blessing of all the rest of us.

All our task forces worked frantically against time.

The Finance people brought a circus to the school grounds (this took some doing, a lot of red-tape cutting and a real confrontation with the local administration), and the Old Globe Theatre, a San Diego Shakespearean troupe of high professional quality, to our auditorium.

The "Outreach" people staged potluck suppers to bring people together. These were a great success; we had some wonderful ethnic cooks in O.B. They also contacted newspapers for publicity and got it, and kept on banging away at the doors of local groups and associations, with occasional luck.

The Curriculum task force—hoping for a next-fall schedule—began serious talks with possible teachers, both volunteer and professional, in the community.

But it was the Needs Assessment Task Force, headed by Lucy Whitworth, that tackled the hardest job of all—finding out the needs, wants and resources existing within a community we were beginning to realize we didn't know much about.

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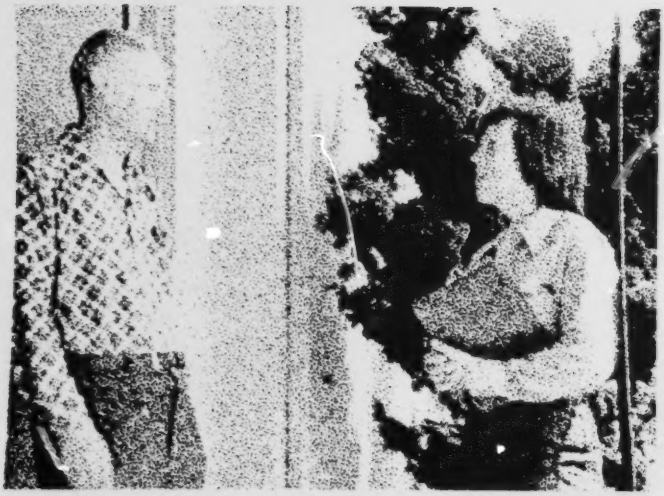


CHAPTER THREE:

TAKING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"Local government and school districts should make schools a center of community activity by having school facilities available year 'round and during and after normal school hours for a vareity of community service functions, delivery of social services by local agencies, adult and community training and educational programs, community meetings and recreational and cultural activities."—National League of Cities.

At the end of this chapter you will find a 10-page needs assessment. It was compiled and designed by Katie Elsbree and Patty Stevens to satisfy a requirement of their degrees in Public Management/Services at Redlands University in June, 1977. It is now being administered, by workers under a RETC grant, in

Ocean Beach. With a few modifications, it should be suitable anywhere, and Katie and Pat cheerfully give you permission to use what you want of it—remembering, however, that the process of development is important in each community and that modifications to suit your unique situation should be found and incorporated.

The first needs assessment we did, in the winter of 75-6, was not that good. Not that we didn't work at it! An unbelievable amount of human energy was expended on that task as we gathered, six or eight at a time, in all sorts of uncomfortable places, scribbling down questions, arranging and re-arranging, choosing and rejecting.

All this was complicated immensely by the fact that the students among us were preparing for finals and the parents for Christmas, and the people who had only part-time jobs were taking on extra work during the holiday season. So everyone's time was fractured and we dashed from one place to another—often through rain—as if chased by wild dogs.

We knew exactly what we wanted to accomplish: To determine needs, defined by Dr. Robbins as "those things the individual deems essential to his or her well-being," discover wants, "those things the individual deems enriching to himself," and pinpoint problems, "those things the individual sees as hindering the growth of the community."

We also wanted to identify ways through which we could get our information across; let the community know what services already existed in it; provide a means for involvement; and somehow persuade those persons who had been turned off by the problems we faced to turn on again to help us work out solutions. Lastly we wanted to learn how to identify resource people so we could persuade them to work with our classes and programs.

Some of the things we tried didn't work out as we expected.

For instance: We designed a senior citizen survey. It was a year in which senior citizens were being recognized by government. There was a nutrition program five days a week in our school cafeteria; a busy city recreation program; many senior citizen centers in churches and one, run by Tova Kostruba, in our recreation center. We thought it important to assess the needs and wants of this important segment of our population.

But in Ocean Beach we have people seventy years old who dress in white uniforms and go to work five days a week as receptionists in doctors' offices; people eighty years old who still make it to the golf course Tuesdays and Thursdays; and a few even older than that, some of them women, who are back from the pier with a bucket of fish before the average middle-ager has answered

the alarm clock.

Such people let us know they did not want to be considered "senior." They felt they had the same concerns as other adults and should fill out the regular survey. Eventually we discarded the senior questionnaire in favor of one for handicapped persons of any age.

We also prepared a youth survey covering young people in junior high and high school. This ran into trouble on several counts. First, some of the questions we asked (about size and income of family) were an invasion of privacy and so forbidden by law. We struck them out. Then we had trouble getting to the kids to get our answers. The high school permitted us to contact certain classes and we got good results there. One junior high school permitted us to leave the forms in the office and told students they could come there to fill them out. Few bothered. The other junior high's principal informed us it was none of our business what his students thought.

Should you take a youth survey (and we think it is a good idea), we suggest you work through the schools and make it a coöperative effort by incorporating into it some of the things the administration also wants to know.

The main questionnaire was sound enough. Much of it, in fact, has been incorporated into the new survey. We felt it was very good indeed. We typed it, xeroxed it, and one Saturday morning everyone fanned forth from Julie Heberger's house to take sample interviews.

We learned, in sampling one block, that doing an interview took an average 22 minutes, with another three minutes involved in getting in and out of the house and five minutes for going from one house to another. So realistically we could each do two an hour. Faced with few workers, five thousand surveys—that was the number we decided would be a fair sampling—and a short time in which to do it, we tried some other approaches.

We left questionnaires with people and arranged to pick them up the next day. That way, we could spend only five minutes at each house. The trouble was, the next day we found that people had forgotten to fill them in, weren't home and hadn't left them at the door when they went out, or had so many questions we spent another 20 minutes with them, anyway.

We set up tables outside supermarkets and banks, catching people on their way in or out. Most people were interested enough to stop, but they hesitated to answer controversial questions, knowing what they said would be overheard and evaluated by others around them.

So finally we returned to our door-by-door canvass, setting up block organizations with block leaders who were trained by us in the purpose and proce-

dures of our survey. We worked right through Christmas vacation and we ate a lot of Christmas candy and fruit cake and cookies while we propounded our ideas.

It was January before we completed our survey.

We learned a lot about people. For one thing, we found that the needs people talked about in groups were not necessarily the ones really of most concern to them. One girl who had been actively demanding a drama club didn't even check that on her survey; instead, she indicated her first priority as protection against rape, and her second—reflecting a somewhat negative attitude—as rape counseling. On the other hand, young men seemed less concerned about the job situation than about the police officers' habit of interrogating every male with long hair who appeared on the streets after dark.

We learned that despite the general gregariousness of O.B., loneliness existed. Katie was shaken when, on one random visit, she encountered an elderly woman who could scarcely talk because she was completely unused to visitors. An invalid confined to her home, she had her food delivered and her other needs cared for by a niece who came to town one day a month and did not linger for conversation. Katie immediately put into action some social services to make this woman's life easier and fuller, but she went about haunted by the thought: "What if my random sample had taken me to the house next door, and I passed that poor woman by?"

We decided that our next needs assessment must reach everybody. The one now being taken will do that.

We also found smiling composed-looking young women who, after a little talk, confessed a growing hostility toward their children. These were the ones who needed the "positive parenting" classes we planned to offer. They also needed child care, to allow them to be adults, not only mothers, on occasion. We promised them help.

And we found resources we hadn't even known existed. The social service Katie enlisted to aid the woman she surveyed was one she had heard about at another house on the street. We found people willing to teach classes, many of them as volunteers. And best of all, we found people willing to work with us on our Ad Hoc Committee.

When the survey was taken, we piled it in big and imposing stacks on a table at Julie's house.

A point to remember and prepare for: Taking the survey is not the hardest part. Tabulating *is*. Our new needs assessment is designed to be tabulated by computer; that is, the questions are almost all "yes" or "no" or multiple choice.

Our first one, unfortunately, was not.

We had hoped to persuade a computer class at one of our local colleges to take it on as a project, anyway. But the colleges—when we got ready for them—were on winter vacation. The adult education center told us we could use their computer if some of us would take a certain number of hours training, but a try at arranging this did not prove practical.

Eventually, we settled down in groups, some tabulating, some reading from the stacked-up surveys. Finally we came up with a report, submitted it to Dr. Robbins and won his approval. It was pretty obvious that the people of Ocean Beach needed a lot of things a community school could provide.

On the basis of this report, we asked the Board of Education to declare Ocean Beach Elementary School a Community School.

While we waited to hear from them, we went over the survey results with our Committee members and then with the full Council. We listed the discovered needs as our first consideration and wants as our second; but problems, inasmuch as we thought we might help to solve them, got a high "think about" priority, and we assigned study groups to a dozen or more areas.

Then we tried to figure out what had the highest priority, and what we could realistically expect to do anything about during the first quarter of operation.

Some of these needs—positive parenting, self-defense, physical fitness and child care—came out high on the list, and the curriculum task force was instructed to make room for them in our first catalog. We also felt we should offer a class in First Aid and contacted the Red Cross to make this possible. In later sessions this became a CPR class and has always been well attended.

We expected a long wait before we heard from the Board. But perhaps they felt sorry for us when they saw how much work had gone into our survey; or perhaps the friends we made at the Administration Center were unusually eloquent in our behalf; or perhaps our own board member, Julie Fisher, somehow convinced them we could really pull it off.

However it happened, on January 28, 1976, long before we ever expected, we were voted San Diego's seventh community school and provided with funding for the remainder of the fiscal year.

We suddenly realized that we were expected to start our program immediately.

This was a bombshell for our principal and our teachers; it was shocking to the PTA; but the biggest impact fell on the weary members of the Ad Hoc Committee who must now—with no time to rest on our laurels—become a full-fledged Community School Advisory Council.

Victory was sweet. It was also, we can admit now, just a little bit scary!

Taking the Needs Assessment in your Area

It is suggested that interviewers (who are very important to the success of you. assessment) be given this information to study.*

INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

This Needs Assessment Survey is being conducted to help determine the problems, needs and wants of the people in the (your community). We hope these needs and desires may be partially met through the
(name) _____Community School.

Each interviewer should have the following materials:

1. (1) identification badge with name clearly printed
2. (10) letters of introduction
3. (11) interviews including one for yourself
4. (1) interview instructions sheet
5. (1) large manila envelope to return completed surveys in
6. (1) Community Education pamphlet from County Dept. of Education
7. (1) card in Spanish
8. (1) fact sheet on Community Education
9. (1) budget sheet
10. (1) current activities list
11. sharpened pencils (carry several with you)

Interview steps

1. Training Session: receive interview materials and be briefed on the interviewing procedures.
2. Receive list of names and addresses of your interviewees.
3. Conduct your interviews as soon as possible.
4. Return completed interviews—preferably as you do them to facilitate tabulating results—to (fill in)

Interviewing Procedure

1. Introduction: "Hello, I am _____ and I am representing the _____ Community School Advisory Council. We are in the process of finding out the needs and desires of the people in this community. This letter will explain our study." (At this time, present the letter of

introduction.)

2. Interview *one* individual from each household, teenager or adult, but not a friend or guest of the household. Younger children will be interviewed at school.
3. If the primary language spoken in the household is one other than English, try to indicate that you will try to find an interviewer who can speak to them in their language. Use your Spanish card for this purpose and turn this address in to your Section Leader.
4. At this time, if you have not previously arranged for the time of the interview, *ask if it would be convenient to complete the interview now.* Try to encourage an immediate interview, but if this isn't possible, do set a definite time within the next two days to return. If you are asked about the time involved, the interview has taken as little as ten minutes and as long as one hour. It's totally individual in that respect.
5. The "instructions" given on the actual questionnaire are to be used only as a guide. Do what seems natural and comfortable for you and your respondent . . . however, a reliable general rule is to keep within normal conversational limits.
6. Allow the person a choice of:
   a. filling out the questionnaire him/her self
   b. having you ask the questions and record the answers yourself
7. If you are refused entry or the person is very negative, thank him/her and go on to the next person on your list. Fill out page 8, "Community Survey" for that address.

Before Completing the Questionnaire

1. Restate that your purpose is only to find out information and opinions. You are not selling anything or representing any company.
2. State that the questionnaire is completely confidential. The person does not have to include his/her name although any specific information given will be helpful. You can put the individual's name on the voluntary information sheet to be contacted for a specific purpose in the future if he/she so desires.
3. State that the answers to the questionnaire will be used only to determine how Community Education may serve the people of the Monterey Heights Community School attendance area.
4. Answer any questions the person being interviewed may ask. Be as forthright as possible. If a question is asked to which you do not know the answer, don't be afraid to say so . . . and invite them to call the Community

School Director.

5. After completing the interview, put the questionnaire in the envelope marked "Completed Interviews."
6. Thank the person for his/her time and help and proceed to the next household assigned to you.
7. A person cooperating with the interviewer may be able to help by contacting neighbors. Since he/she has given this much time to the interview, you might ask if he/she would consider calling on close neighbors.

Some Interview Tips

1. Act in an open, supportive manner to set the individual at ease. Answer questions and respond to the interviewee in as positive a manner as possible. Remember, the questionnaire is designed not only to solicit the individual's opinions, but also to be a public relations and educational tool with regard to the Community School.
2. Be patient . . . show no impatience or hostility with "impatient and hostile" participants and their questions even on occasion they do seem an outright attack.
3. Be aware of your own anxiety level.
4. Tolerate silence.
5. Focus on the "Here and Now."
6. Listen actively. You want the person to feel important and worthwhile, to feel understood and that there has been real communication. The values of the person being interviewed should be highlighted and the value *judgments* of the interviewer be eliminated or minimized. The interviewer puts aside his/her opinions while conducting an interview. The goal is to have the other party feel accepted both as a person and as a worthwhile individual who has something important to say.
7. Be sure you understand what your respondent is trying to say to you. If necessary for clarification ask additional questions or paraphrase what has been said to you to see if you have understood.
8. If the person being interviewed becomes argumentative or abusive, simply leave as quietly as possible. Attempt to show the person the importance and non-obligation of the questionnaire, but do not argue or "talk back."
9. Do not leave the questionnaire to be mailed or picked up later. State simply that the questions will take only a few minutes to answer and you would prefer to either wait or to return at a later time.

10. Tell the person that he/she and all of his/her neighbors are being asked the same questions. By compiling all of the responses, a "picture" of the needs, wants and problems of the Community will be obtained.
11. Make the respondent feel that his answers to the questionnaire are important to the study. Some of the questions may seem unimportant, but they have been carefully selected to help determine the needs and desires of the Community.
12. If a respondent objects to answering or is unable to answer any specific question, simply allow him/her to skip that item and complete the rest of the questionnaire.
13. Try to conduct the interview in a quiet place. Suggest a room where the TV isn't on, etc.
14. Promise nothing you can't or don't intend to follow through on.
15. If you run into trouble, come back and talk with us. We may have overlooked something which we should have pointed out to you.
16. *Remember!* We do not expect or want a polished, detached, impersonal interviewer. You are special. We hope you will come across as an interested neighbor—*a human being—a fellowperson.*

HAVE FUN AND GOOD LUCK! LET US KNOW HOW IT IS GOING!

*This form was compiled by the Monterey Heights, California, Community School and is included because it is better than ours was.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
GENERAL INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Interviewed by: _____

Date: _____

NOTE: Respondents are assured the above information is confidential and will be used only to identify needs in the community.

_____ 1. Age of respondent: 1. 16-21_____ 2. 21-30_____
3. 31-40_____ 4. 41-50_____ 5. 50-55_____
6. 56-65_____ 7. Over 65_____.

_____ 2. Number of persons in household is: (circle)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

_____ 3. Number of persons in each age group (include self):
1. 5 and under_____ 2. 6-12_____ 3. 12-15_____
4. 16-21_____ 5. 21-30_____ 6. 31-40_____ 7.41-50_____
8. 50-55_____ 9. 56-65_____ 10. Over 65_____

_____ 4. Sex of respondent: 1. Male_____ 2. Female_____

_____ 5. Are you or any member of your household in military service?
1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____ 6. Are you or any member of your household employed as a civilian in any military establishment?
1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____ 7. Are you presently employed? 1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____ 8. What sort of work do you do? 1. Professional_____
2. Technical_____ 3. Clerical_____ 4. Services_____
5. Crafts_____ 6. Unskilled_____ 7. Other_____

_____ 9. Is your spouse employed? 1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____10. What sort of work does spouse do? 1. Professional_____
2. Technical_____ 3. Clerical_____ 4. Services_____
5. Crafts_____ 6. Unskilled_____ 7. Other_____

LIBRARY QUESTIONNAIRE

_____ 1. Where, PRIMARILY, do you obtain your reading material?
0. No material _____ 1. Mail _____ 2. Loans from friends _____
3. Purchase _____ 4. Library _____ 5. Other _____.

_____ 2. What type of reading do you prefer? 0. None _____
2. Newspapers _____ 3. Magazines _____ 4. Paperbacks _____
5. Books _____.

_____ 3. Are you interested in: 1. Recordings _____ 2. Tapes _____
3. Films _____ 4. Children's materials _____.

_____ 4. Are you aware the library has ALL of the above?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____.

_____ 5. Frequency of Library use: 0. Never _____ 2. Occasional _____
3. Monthly _____ 4. Weekly _____ 5. Daily _____.

_____ 6. If never, why not? _____

_____ 7. What hours are most convenient for you to use the library?
1. 9 a.m.-12 _____ Noon-5 p.m. _____ 3. 5-9 p.m. _____
4. After 9 p.m. _____.

_____ 8. What do you use the library for most? 1. Recreation _____
2. Information _____ 3. 5-9 p.m. _____ 4. After 9 p.m. _____

_____ 9. Do other members of your household use the library on a regular basis? 1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ If yes, are they:
1. Elementary school age _____ 2. Teen-age _____
3. Young adult _____ 4. Adult not retired _____
5. Retired adult _____.

_____ 10. Have you any suggestions to make the library and its services more attractive to you and the other members of your household? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

COMMUNITY PLANNING SURVEY

Sunset Cliffs have been eroding for centuries and will continue to do so at a somewhat unpredictable rate for causes both natural and human. Which of the following directions do you favor in approaching this problem?

_____ 1. Install man-made devices (i.e. seawalls, gunite, etc.) to curtail erosion.
_____ 2. Do nothing that intrudes man-made devices upon the natural process.
_____ 3. Restrict human travel along the cliffs to halt at least the human factor in the erosion.
_____ 4. Combination of #1 and #2.
_____ 5. Combination of #1 and #3.
_____ 6. Combination of #1 and #4.
_____ 7. Combination of #2 and #3.
_____ 8. Combination of #2 and #4.
_____ 9. Combination of #3 and #4.
_____10. Other _____

_____

_____11. Are you interested in vegetable gardening?
1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____12. If yes, would you be interested in working a plot of land in a community garden located in Ocean Beach?
1. Yes_____ 2. No_____ If yes, please give name and phone:
Name _____ Phone No._____

_____13. Do you feel Ocean Beach needs a local office of the Welfare Department?
1. Yes_____ 2. No_____

_____14. Do you think foodstamps should be distributed at the local postoffice?
1. Yes_____ 2.No_____

_____15. If there were some local office in Ocean Beach that would receive and pursue complaints concerning the services received from various governmental agencies, how often would you have had reason to use that office within the past six months?
0. Never_____ 1. Once_____ 2. Two or three times_____
4. Several times_____

16. Assuming money is not a problem, what is the ONE biggest improvement in the physical appearance of Ocean Beach the City could initiate? _____

_____

_____

17. Have you, during the past six months, tried to obtain financing to purchase or remodel a residential building in Ocean Beach?
1. Yes____ 2. No____
If yes, did you have difficulty because of the area?
1. Yes____ 2. No____

18. Have you experienced a repeated problem with any of the following to the extent you felt the need of a community-wide program to reduce the problem? (check)
1. Dogs____ 2. Cats____ 3. Fleas____ 4. Roaches____
5. Flies____ 6. Mice____ 7. Ants____ 8. Rats____
9. Other_____

19. Is litter an annoyance to you in any of the following areas in Ocean Beach?
1. Beaches____ 2. Parks____ 3. Commercial streets____
4. Residential streets____ 5. Alleys____ 6. Other_____

20. Do you feel the need for a street light in your block?
1. Yes____ 2. No____

21. If you are a renter: Have you had a rent increase in the past six months?
1. Yes____ 2. No____ 3. If yes, how much? $____
Do you feel it was justified? 3. Yes____ 4. No____
Is your present rent: 5. Under $100____ 6. $100-150____
7. $150-200____ 8. $200-250____ 9. Over $250____
What is your type of rental? 10. Studio____
11. 1-bedroom____ 12. 2-bedroom____ 13. House or apartment larger than 2-bedroom____ 14. Condominium____

22. If you own rentals: 1. Have you found it necessary to increase rents in the past six months? 1. Yes____ 2. No____
3. If so, how much more per month? _____
What factors contributed to that increase: 4. Inflation increasing maintenance costs____ 5. Taxes____ 6. Keeping pace with the market____

_____23. Do you feel there is a need for a housing referral service in Ocean Beach? 1. Yes_____ 2. No_____
If yes, check one or both of the following: 3. To help people find adequate housing_____ 4. To help landlords find tenants_____

_____24. How do you rate public transportation in general?
3. Good_____
4. Fair_____
5. Poor_____
Please rate the following modes of transportation 1-4 according to this scale: 1—haven't used and don't want to; 2—haven't used but might want to; 3—have used, found it good; 4—have used, found it fair; 5—have used, found it poor.

_____25. Taxis: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.
_____26. Automobile: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.
_____27. Transit bus: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.
_____28. Dial-a-Ride: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.
_____29. Bike Route: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.
_____30. Hitch-hiking: 1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____.

_____31. Ocean Beach has a Community Relations Office as a branch of the San Diego Police Department located in a store front. Have you ever used its services? 1. Yes_____ 2. No_____. If yes, for what?_____

_____32. How do you rate the level of police service in this community?
1. Excellent_____ 2. _____Good_____ 3. Poor_____

_____33. If your answer on the above was poor, on what do you base this opinion? _____
_____

_____34. Do you feel that you personally have received adequate police protection? 1. Yes_____ 2. No_____. If no, why not? _____

_____35. Have you any suggestions to improve police service to our community?_____
_____
_____

OCEAN BEACH COMMUNITY SERVICES SURVEY

____ 1. Have you heard of OBCS? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 2. How did you hear of OBCS? 1. Newspapers____ 2. Friends____
3. Seeing the office____ 4. Reading our advertisement ____
5. Other _____

_____

____ 3. Do you know our exact location? 1. Yes____ No____.

____ 4. Have you ever used any OBCS service? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 5. If yes, were you satisfied with the service received? 1. Yes____
2. No____. If no, why not?_____

_____

____ 6. How would you suggest that OBCS be improved? _____

_____

_____

____ 7. Would you come to OBCS for counseling? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.
If no, why not?_____

_____

____ 8. OBCS offers Job and Career Counseling. Are you:
1. Employed____ 2. Under-employed____ 3. Unemployed____

____ 9. In regard to the above, do you need job counseling? 1. Yes____.
2. No____

____10. Are you actively seeking a job? 1. Yes____2. No____ If no, why not? _____

____11. Do you need health care? 1. Yes____ 2. No____. If yes, what? ____

____12. Do you use the Beach Area Free Clinic? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____13. Would you use a free health care clinic if one were located in Ocean Beach? 1. Yes____. 2. No____. If no, why not?_____

____14. Have you any comments or suggestions on any of the above subjects? _____

_____

_____

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SURVEY

____ 1. Have you heard about the new Community School concept at Ocean Beach Elementary Community School? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 2. Do you feel you understand the concept? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 3. Would you like to know more about what is going on in your community? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 4. Would you participate in a class or program of any kind at the Ocean Beach Elementary Community School? 1. Yes____. 2. No____ 3. Maybe____.

____ 5. Would the chance of your participation increase if child care were provided while you took part in the class or program? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 6. What ONE activity or program would you personally like most to see at the O.B. Community School for yourself and/or your family?
1. _____
_____

____ 7. Would you like to help us organize this activity? 1. Yes____ 2. No____ 3. Maybe____.

____ 8. Would you like to see more social activities? 1. Yes____ 2. No____.

____ 9. Would you like to see more recreational activities? 1. Yes____ 2. No____ If yes: 3. What kind?_____
_____

____10. Would you like to see more cultural activities? 1. Yes____ 2. No____ If yes: 3. What kind?_____
_____

____11. Would you be willing to serve on our Community School Advisory Council? 1. Yes____ 2. No____ 3. Maybe____. If yes, fill in:
Name _____
Phone _____

____12. Please indicate your need of child care: 0. None____ 1. Some____ 2. Important____ 3. Critical____.

____13. Please indicate type of child care needed: 1. Infant (6 mo.-2 yrs.)____ 2. Pre-school____ 3. Extended day care (5-12 yrs.)____ 4. Other____.

____25. Do you know of any senior citizens in this area who are alone and/or could make use of various senior services? 1. Yes____ 2. No____
3. If yes, give name and phone no. _____

____26. Do you have any special community concerns, or any final thoughts and suggestions? (Use back of this sheet if needed)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

COMMUNITY MAJOR PROBLEMS SURVEY

_____ 1. In your opinion, what is the ONE most major problem in our community?_____

_____

_____ 2. In your opinion, what is the ONE most basic need of our children? _____

_____

_____ 3. In your opinion, what is the ONE most basic need of our teen-agers?

_____

_____ 4. In your opinion, what is the ONE most basic need of our adults?_____

_____

_____ 5. In your opinion, what is the ONE most basic need of our senior citizens?_____

_____

_____ 6. In your opinion, what are the three MOST IMPORTANT acts which should be taken to make Ocean Beach a better community?

A. _____

_____

_____

_____

B. _____

_____

_____

_____

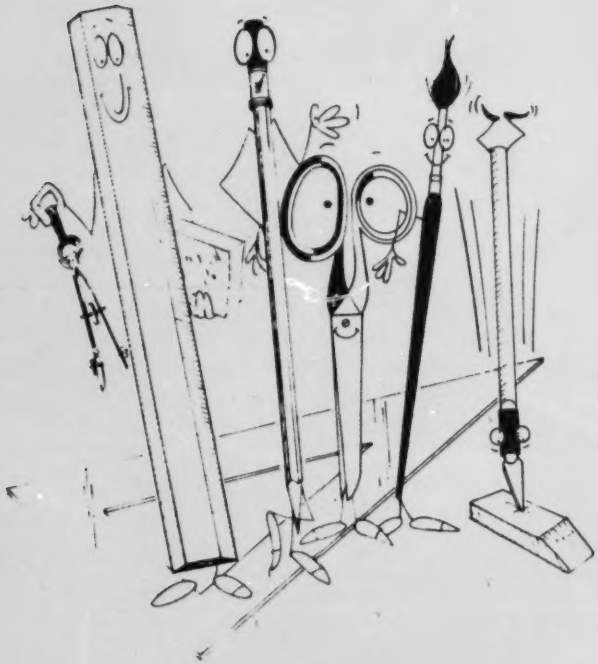
C. _____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY.



CHAPTER FOUR:

THE FIRST OCEAN BEACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL EVER!

"It seems to me that every person, always, is in a kind of informal partnership with his community. His own success is dependent to a large degree on that community, and the community, after all, is the sum total of the individuals who make it up. The institutions of a community, in turn, are the means by which those individuals express their faith, their ideals, and their concern for fellow men."—C. S. Mott.

One of the things any Advisory Council must keep in mind is that the community school is a process, not merely a program.

The San Diego Center for Community Education stresses the iceberg analogy, with the program as the tip of the iceberg and the unseen process below the force that keeps it going.

Because we started as a group wholly dedicated to this concept, and because we had never been diluted by newcomers who did not understand it, we found it reasonably easy to remember this, when, early in February, we reorganized ourselves to become the first Ocean Beach Community School Advisory Council.

It was our insistence that the process be recognized and our goals pursued, not just buried between short-term objectives, that confused those persons in the school structure who saw community schooling as primarily a series of classes.

The better our rapport with the people in the Community Education Center, the worse our relationship with the school and its teachers, to whom, even after the Board recognized us, we had not been given access. Convinced we were heretics who would disappear if they "paid us no mind," neither teachers nor representatives of the PTA attended our meetings; and our principal, though he sometimes put in an appearance, made it clear he had not accepted us as a permanent fixture in his domain. We wanted too much, too fast. He gave us too little, too late. We were at an impasse.

While everything we read about community education, and everything visitors from more established schools and the Mott Foundation told us, convinced us that "the principal is the key to success," this was one key we found impossible to turn. So, although we had now thrown a drawbridge across the moat, the door to what we wanted to do remained pretty much locked against us.

This situation became evident to everyone when the time came to choose our Community Services Specialist. This is the title used in our area to designate the person in charge of setting up and operating the community school. In other districts such a person is called "director" or "coordinator" or even—if the vibes are right—"vice principal."

The specialist holds a very important position in the school and, by extension, in the community. We wanted the person chosen to be more than an impersonal administrator. For one thing, we wanted a person who subscribed completely to the concept that the school functions as a delivery system to provide the people of the community with programs and services of their choosing and also as a feedback channel if they do not like what they get or if they wish to initiate something more.

We wanted our specialist to be a resident of O.B. with a record of community involvement, preferably with our Ad Hoc Committee. Our primary request was that this person be chosen by a hiring committee drawn from our Council membership. This was the process that had been used at the majority of community schools already established.

The District has standards for this position. There is no test; oral interviews and review of education and experience determine placement. To be sure the qualities we felt most important were given consideration, we even submitted a list to Ms. Schulze and she agreed to distribute it among the persons assisting her with the interviews. Among the qualities we listed:

Ability to relate to all aspects of a community
Understanding of, and respect for, all cultures which might be encountered
Commitment to the community education process
Personal integrity.

Interviews were conducted. A list of candidates was released and to our great delight ten O.B. people were on it. One, a loyal worker who had all the academic and experience requirements, inexplicably did not impress the judges enough to make the list. We asked that he, too, be put on the list, even if on the very bottom, and we fought this all to the top and lost—not because of the school administration but because the personnel department ruled that, once a list has been established, it is illegal—and unfair to others—to add or subtract.

We still felt that the hiring committee should come from Council ranks. But we also subscribed wholeheartedly to the concept that it should be chosen to represent all aspects of the community, and here we ran into predictable trouble. In the other school Councils mentioned above the whole project had begun at the top and worked down, so the Council, when constituted, had a full complement from all school-related and community-active groups. Ours didn't. Organizations of the community, and especially organizations related to the school, were conspicuously absent from our membership.

We could, and did, choose a representative from the Ocean Beach Town Council (Bob Miller) and another from Ocean Beach Community Services (Gloria Goldberg). We tried to pick other hiring committee members so they would represent various community interests—child care, senior citizens (LoVerne was our token senior!), and we chose Don Hodo, director of the city's Recreation Center across the street, because we expected to integrate our programs with his in many cases. But we had no representatives from the PTA Board of Directors, and no teachers.

We therefore had no defense when the principal completed the Committee by picking one PTA representative and one teacher to serve on the Hiring Committee. Although we had hoped that any such representation might come from people who understood and approved of community education, we bowed rather ungraciously to the realities of our situation, stating by resolution that the PTA was "welcome to the Hiring Committee, with the understanding it will now send a representative to Council meetings and remain active in Council affairs."

Meanwhile, another idea had surfaced. Governor Gerald Brown of our state had been reported by United Press to favor a plan in which people who were lucky enough to have jobs would share them with persons unemployed. Jobs were hard to get all over California and even scarcer in San Diego which in the spring of 1976 had an unemployment rate of more than 10%.

Many of the people on the specialist list had been going to school on the GI bill or working part time while they sought their education. They were used to surviving on small incomes. So what if we split the job?

This would serve two purposes: It would bring employment to two families instead of one, and it would provide more energy—we knew our people well enough to be sure each would put in six or seven hours a day instead of the expected four.

This decision was tentatively approved by the Administration, with the provision the Hiring Committee could find two well-qualified persons will ng to work part-time who were also harmonious with each other.

On the eve of the first meeting of the Hiring Committee, we learned that the principal, who was to chair the Hiring Committee, would reserve the right to veto any person or persons chosen if he did not feel he could work well with him. Again, this was something that might have been taken in stride had we been a from-the-top-down Council, with some assurance that we were all pointed in the same direction. Under the circumstances, we were afraid none of us would meet this criterion, and our six representatives reported to the first meeting of the Committee in a very apprehensive frame of mind.

Ten persons from the top of the list, including six of our own people, were sent for interviews. All were qualified. After the interviews were over but before discussion of the applicants, the principal announced that one of the persons who belonged to the Council would be vetoed, "for personal reasons," if chosen. He made no objection when the Committee almost unanimously chose Denny Doyle, also one of us, as the first of the half-time people. But the Committee then retired with no second choice made, and Council members went home angry and frustrated.

At the Council meeting that night, attended by PTA officers, administration officials and a full council, we held our first real "shouting" session. Accusations flew back and forth; our chairperson, a man of pacific nature, blanched. When the air cleared, the District had instructed the Hiring Committee to interview all O.B. people on the District's list, so long as we did not rule out the persons not from O.B. who were already interviewed.

At its next session a subdued Hiring Committee chose another man from

our group, Alan Someck. He, like Denny, was a gentle person of immense good will. Both of our new specialists had teacher training and considerable experience in working with people on all levels. Best of all, their special talents were complementary rather than repetitive. We felt good about them.

Our battle for recognition had only begun. But with two of our own people officially occupying the room assigned to us in the school, the promise of part-time secretarial help, and the sight of our very own child care project setting up operations next door to our office, we felt we were making headway.

It was time to give our attention to helping our specialists set up curriculum for the spring quarter.

Some questions and some answers:

Should your Council choose two half-time people instead of one full-time specialist?

That depends on many circumstances. Do you have two good people on the list who are willing to work part time? If so, are they compatible with each other, so they will work well in tandem, and yet complementary to each other, so that one supplies the skills the other may lack?

If the answers are yes, then you must measure the two against the qualified persons who want to work only full time. Choose the abilities which are best for you, whether incorporated in one body or in two; for what you are most interested in is the good of your community school and, through it, the greening of your entire community.

Should the principal have veto power over the appointment? It is generally conceded that he should, since he must work closely with the person assigned, and trust is an important ingredient in such a situation. It would have been better, however, if such an intention were communicated directly to the person involved, and reasons given, prior to the meeting, so the person to be rejected could decide not to appear. In our case, it seems likely that the principal, rather than intending to insult our member, merely hesitated too long, in hope the situation demanding veto would not arise. His reasons for the veto never surfaced. During the year that followed, he and the rejected person became good friends.

Should the principal have appointed the PTA and teacher representatives to the Council?

There is no easy answer to that one. Obviously, they should have been members of the Council long before the hiring committee situation ever developed. Since they were not, there was no way anyone but the principal could have appointed them. Certainly their input was needed. During the 1977-78 school year, a new Hiring Committee will be set up, and we hope that the delegates

from various school-related groups will also be working members of our new Advisory Council, or, failing that, persons with a clear understanding and no fears of the community education process. As of this writing we anticipate few if any problems. We feel the administration and the Advisory Council have moved significantly closer to each other in the past few months. While last year was one of challenge, we see the year ahead as one of cooperation, and, as a result, achievement.

Back in March, 1976, as we worked feverishly to get our program together, it would have been nice to know this!

CHAPTER FIVE:

MATCHING TEACHERS TO NEEDS

"Schools should be designed to utilize educational opportunities outside the traditional classrooms. In accordance, greater access to school facilities and programs should be afforded to the surrounding community. Such sharing will meet substantive school and community needs as well as increasing public confidence and support of school systems."—Council of Chief State School Officers.

Because of the scramble to get started, most of what we talk about in the next two chapters was more or less simultaneous. We are dividing the subjects only so that you will not end up, after reading, as confused as we were while we were doing it.

Our Curriculum Committee at its first meeting determined from community response that classes were wanted in child development, first aid, creative writing, self defense, legal rights, health care, music, dance, art, stained glass, basketry, yoga and meditation. A check of the resource people suggested by survey respondents and our own awareness of talent in the community provided a good number of people to contact as potential teachers in our program.

We agreed to a philosophical approach to curriculum which would encourage self-help, people helping people, and sharing of experiences, so that we would all learn from one another in a non-hierarchical way. We saw the convenor of a class as a mentor and invite active participation from everyone.

Our eight committee members then set a deadline for getting out information on which classes would be offered, distribution of catalog, and date classes would actually start.

Setting a date was the easy part.

Each of us now assumed responsibility for contacting prospective teachers in particular interest areas. We were to find out if they were interested in teaching ("Your name was recently suggested by your neighbors as a possible resource teacher in _____. Would you be interested in teaching a class in Community School?"), what their qualifications were, what day and time would be best, whether they needed to be paid or could volunteer time, how many weeks the class would last, the minimum and maximum number of pupils they would consider, and what their space and equipment needs would be.

We discovered many people interested in offering free classes. In addition, there were many willing local agencies already funded to do classes and workshops in the community, and they were delighted to find a space in which to do this.

Before long we were deluged with offers. We settled down to make decisions based on the priorities we had selected. We took the time to develop a file of individuals and organizations available, cross-referenced as to interest areas, so that, even if we did not need them immediately, we could find them when necessary. This file is continually updated and is of great use in locating potentials and in making referrals when someone needs a private tutor, for instance.

Since there was no money in our budget to pay our teachers, it was necessary that fees be set for some classes. Important decisions needed to be made on this. We recommended to the Council that our teachers who were not volunteers be paid a maximum of $6 per hour, with the exception of dance teachers, who, because they were unobtainable at the lower rate, would be paid $10 per hour.

Students were to pay a fee based on $1 per class hour (except senior citizens, who went free). Thus, a one-hour-a-week course that ran for ten weeks would cost the student $10, and the teacher needed only six students in the class to get the maximum wage. The teacher also had the option of charging only $5, assuming that the lower fee would enable twice as many people to enroll.

If not enough students showed up to cover the maximum wage, the teacher could then choose either to teach the class for the amount of money available, or drop the class. Our contracts reflected this agreement.

In the occasional cases where fewer students enrolled than expected, our dedicated teachers usually taught the class, anyway, either at a lower wage or for free.

If there were more students, and therefore more money, than needed, the extra funds went into our Council fund to meet expenses for special programs and events.

Our Council promptly approved all the above suggestions. In addition, it was decided that a voluntary one dollar registration fee would be suggested to provide a source of funding to subsidize the senior citizens in our class and our after-school classes for children (no fee was charged for these children-classes, and teachers were paid at the same rate as those teaching adults). Revenue from the voluntary registration fee (which was always paid willingly) also provided child care during our evening classes.

By helping some of our teachers qualify for Community College and Adult Education credentials we brought in other sources of funds, making it possible to offer classes without fee, and we have also offered classes sponsored by the Park and Recreation Department and using their staff as instructors.

Through the efforts of Alan Someck and his Seniors Committee, we recently began a series of Summer Forums for seniors. This is being done in cooperation with San Diego State University's Educational Growth Opportunities Program. Some of our local senior citizens have been enlisted as paid lecturers, and the series, held directly after the nutrition program lunch at the school, has been well-attended.

Going back to our first frantic session, though: It was Linda Taggart, a committed member of our Council and our first paid clerk, who developed our office and filing system. She worked out a registration procedure that goes like this:

A student comes in to pay for a class (let's say, *Jazz Dance*). A ledger has been set up with a page for each class. When the student pays the proper fee, the name is entered on the appropriate page, and with it the amount paid, the date, and, in a separate column, whether or not they had paid the voluntary registra-

tion fee. Then student is issued a receipt, with a duplicate retained by the office, and the receipt number is recorded in the ledger. Teachers have direct access to this book and can tell at a glance who and how many have paid for their classes.

The system works very well. We recommend it as a simple way to keep accounts straight.

Self-administration was encouraged by providing a manila folder for each class and asking the teacher to record the name, address and phone number of each student on a roll form taped to the inside cover. Teachers checked into the office before class, pulled their folders, used them in class to remind persons delinquent with fees and also for roll-call, then returned them to the office when class was over. We, in turn, used the folders to put in leaflets of upcoming events, evaluation forms and notes of interest to the teacher, as they come in—so each teacher has a full complement of material to be shared with the class.

Incidentally, fees were not charged until the second meeting. This permitted students to shop around and try out classes before having to make a commitment.

For our own use, we developed a Room Calendar book in a three-ring binder. This contained a sheet for every day there were classes, and a grid that, along one column, had hours of the day, and along the other every room available for our use. Classes were penciled in for the appropriate rooms and times, so we knew which classes were going in which rooms during which hours for each day. This helped us to avoid conflict in scheduling meetings and special events.

With these systems set up, and our catalog out, we were ready to roll, and our first day of classes—April 12—was upon us before we knew it.

That Monday evening is a memory crisp and clear in all our minds: Hundreds of people streaming into school; Council members welcoming them and directing them to the classrooms; a coffee and tea table set up in the hall; lines forming to pay fees; teachers coming with books and other paraphernalia asking that their doors be unlocked—it was a madhouse of activity and an unbelievable peak experience, and suddenly we were all laughing and embracing each other, tears running down our faces, awed by the realization of dreams come finally true.

That first session went pretty well. We had classes in Drawing, Positive Parenting, First Aid, Stained Glass, Poetry, Tap Dancing, Introductory Astrology, Flute, Goal Setting, Aerobic Dance, Awareness Exercises, Karate, Mexican Cooking, Physiology and Nutrition, Basket Weaving, Legal Rights, Journalism, Life Planning, Women's Consciousness, Jazz Dance, Creative Writing, Commu-

nity Organizing, Yoga, Shiatsu Healing, Men's Liberation and Jogging. Most classes were 10 weeks long, but a few short courses lasted only 6 or 8 weeks.

After-school Enrichment classes attracted many children to Art, Quilting, Photography, Tap Dance, Ballet and Acrobatics; and we held short workshops on Home Remodeling, Graphic Arts and Video Production.

Of course, a few problems surfaced. We had been assigned specific rooms to use, and in at least one case the daytime teacher had not been told her room would host Community School classes after school and at night. Understandably, she was a little irate at having been left out of the decision-making process. And there were complaints that at times rooms were not left in order for the next day's elementary school classes, chairs put away, blackboards erased, etc.

At that time the community services specialists did not have keys to the rooms. It was necessary to ask the night-time custodian to open our classrooms, a chore which interrupted his work routine. We were also without access to the teachers' work room, which was needed for duplicating and mimeographing purposes.

Then we began to get complaints about one particular dance class which was not lasting the full hour for which it was scheduled. We were told there seemed always to be a teacher other than the one contracted for in charge. We met with the dance teacher and some of her students to work out differences. The teacher denied that her class was not a full hour long. She claimed she used ten minutes outside of actual dance-time for individual instruction, and that she spent just as much time researching dance and exercise materials for her class as she did teaching. She told us she intended to get full payment ($10/hr.) both for herself and for the other teacher who assisted her.

After much haggling, the dispute was settled, only after an attorney, a resident of the community, worked out a compromise solution satisfactory to both sides.

But the curriculum committee had learned a lesson and we unanimously voted to strengthen the contract wording and set a maximum for all classes of $6/hr. We haven't had a problem with a teacher since—and the dance classes are still going.

We also, that first session, learned that the staff of the Recreation Center was concerned that our program encroached upon theirs.

It was obvious we had some bugs to work out. Denny, Alan and Katie met with Don, Rose and Mike of the Rec Center to learn how we could work more cooperatively. We learned that dance classes were again the trouble. The Rec

had been offering Tap and Jazz classes, but when the Community School offered the same classes at higher rates of pay the teachers left the Rec program and went to work at the school instead. Their students went with them. There was also some dissatisfaction in that we had failed to mention in our catalog that some of the classes listed were sponsored by the Rec. We promised to check the Rec program ahead of time, and schedule new classes to avoid duplication and give credit where credit was due. We have been most successful in developing coordinated scheduling ever since.

In addition, we learned how we could make some of our resources available to the Rec Center, and how we could both utilize our facilities to support each other's programs. Since then it's become an everyday thing to hear a specialist say, "Hey, Don, I have a Mediterranean Cooking class that wants to use your kitchen. Can you free one night a week for us?," or to hear from Don Hodo, the Rec Director, "Denny, the Little League wants to have an organizational meeting but the room's booked up; can you lend them a classroom?"

We also planned some projects we could work on together. Eventually a day-long workshop was held with participants from the Park and Recreation Department and Community Schools throughout the County, and this resulted in better working relationships everywhere.

As summer approached, we saw we had still more changes to make before the regular school term closed. Alan and Denny met with Dr. Craig to seek some solutions and Dr. Craig did some trouble-shooting for us. He met with PTA representatives and with the daytime staff to hear their concerns, and then relayed them to us. Since most of the problems had to do with use or mis-use of school rooms, we authorized Alan and Denny to work with the community school teachers to find solutions. That meeting resulted in a list of guidelines developed by our teachers, which was then approved by our Council, and later printed for distribution to teachers and staff, and also to the summer elementary school teachers who were on site. Dr. Craig also had input in the final guidelines, which appear at the end of this chapter in their adopted form.

Dr. Craig also arranged for our specialists to be given keys to the rooms we used, which pleased the custodians and made the whole operation easier.

As each new session approached, curriculum development became easier and more mechanical. Contracts were renewed for teachers of successful classes and the curriculum committee met periodically to suggest new classes and set up special events. Denny and Alan took over the responsibility for interviewing prospective teachers and arranging contracts. The program seemed to evolve out of these good energies and grow stronger each quarter.

But program is one thing. The feeling of "community" is quite another, and we were not satisfied with simply offering classes. We decided to break down barriers. We held potluck dinners for our teachers. We held seminars for them before or after the potlucks, so the teachers had a means of socializing and getting to know each other and were also learning the principles of community education. We developed our community school office into a lounge, with coffee, teas and natural food snacks for sale at cost. We encouraged students to come by before or after class, and many teachers held a break-time so people could meet in our office and get to know their neighbors.

We realized, too, that we would have to impact the daytime elementary program if the school were ever to become a real community school. Some work had been done in this area—mostly by recruiting students from our evening classes into the daytime volunteer program—but we had done little to help our daytime staff. So, with the help of Don Hensley, our enthusiastic summer school principal, we set up a series of mini-classes on Fridays which provided children with some activities not offered in their regular curriculum: Guitar, poetry, stained glass, batik, creative dramatics, macrame, art stitchery, tennis, art, yoga, tumbling and clay. The summer school teachers welcomed our effort and community volunteers provided energy for the classes. These mini-classes worked so well they were integrated into the regular school year program and have provided a key link in the development of a community school.

A sense of community has at last developed, and though no doubt we have many evolutionary stages to go through, the feelings, personal relationships and sense of belonging that we all experience are exhilarating.

Perhaps Ed Hinkle, our sympathetic night-time custodian, epitomizes the community spirit best when he asks, arms outflung: "When does the next session start? Open the doors and let the people in!"

OCEAN BEACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL
GUIDELINES

For teachers, instructors and facilitators, etc.

1. SMOKING. Generally we frown on smoking at any time, but for those addicted to tobacco we suggest that each class plan a break-time. *The only place smoking is permitted on the school site is in the Community School Lounge (Room 18),* which also doubles as our School Office, and where coffee and teas are also available for a small donation. Please take an active responsibility for directing smokers to the lounge. Remember that this building is used by children during the day, and the stale musty odor of cigarette smoke is a sickening presence in a room in which they must spend the morning. *Please also discourage smoking on the steps, in front of the school, or in the playground area.* The children find cigarette butts there and play "smoking" with them. This is bad modeling behavior. Let's all help to create a clean healthy environment for our children and ourselves.
2. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS. *Both are strictly prohibited* anywhere around the school site. Use of them by anyone at any time threatens our program. Please help us to enforce this necessary rule.
3. SECURITY. The best security we can have at our school is the security we ourselves provide. *The key to good security is awareness.* Encourage all community school participants to watch out for each other's safety when coming or going. Help students to form car pools, particularly for seniors, who may not wish to go out on the streets at night. Remind people not to leave handbags or other valuables unattended while at classes. *Discourage people from just hanging around.* Take the initiative in directing people to activities if they seem to need such help.
4. DOGS. There are better environments for dogs than wandering around the school grounds or in the classrooms. Please help us to see to it that people *leave their pets at home.*
5. NOISE LEVELS. Remember that ultra-high noise levels in your class may interfere with lessons in another room. *Respect each other's need for quiet.* Help us foster respect for each other's classes.
6. ROOM CARE. Remember there are multi-uses for the space your class is using. *Leave the room exactly as you found it*—chairs back in place, all windows closed and *locked,* no litter left. See to it that items used for daytime instruction are not moved. You might want to leave a friendly greeting on the board for those who use the room in the daytime. *Contact the community school office as soon as you are done with your classroom* so that doors can be locked immediately.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES. The Community School staff will handle most bureaucratic administrative procedures (e.g., registration and collection of fees where applicable). However, *teachers are responsible for a certain amount of self-administration.* For instance:

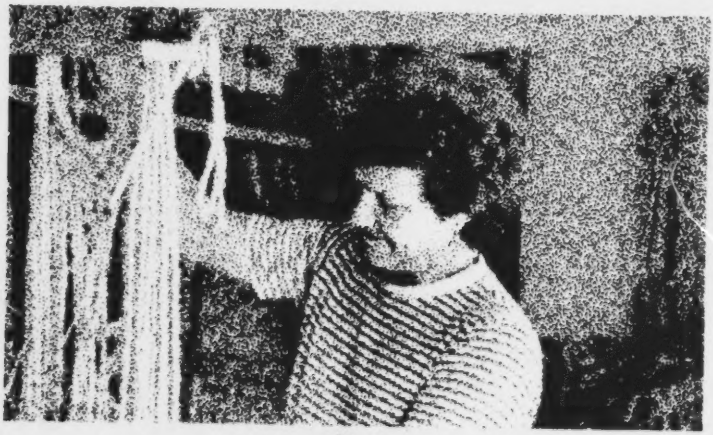
Each class has a folder on file in the School Office. Teachers are expected to check in at the office before class begins, pull their folders and record in those folders the names, addresses and telephones of those attending their class.

If fees are involved, teachers are to check this list against the registration book to see that those attending have actually registered and paid.

This list will also serve as a class list for attendance purposes. While attendance is certainly not mandatory, it is suggested that classes and activities attempt to meet the needs of students in every way possible. You may help keep up attendance in your class by contacting students who are not regularly attending, to see if there are difficulties that you or someone else in the school community can alleviate (e.g., child care, special help in a subject area, transportation).

Notices of upcoming activities, new classes to be starting and other pertinent materials will be placed in the class folders. Please distribute this information and continue to encourage class participation. Also ask students to share the notices with their neighbors and friends. If everyone involved in our school becomes involved in helping each other organize people, we will reinforce and build our growing learning community.

Thank you for the great role you, as a teacher in the Ocean Beach Community School, will play in making it a success.



CHAPTER SIX:

GETTING THE WORD OUT

"It is a concept in the best traditions of our nation and should have the support of us all. We must regard the school as more than a classroom. It is a vital and integral part of our community life."—Frank Church, U.S. Senator, Idaho.

Since we started our Council in April 1976 we have put out seven catalogs, plus three poetry magazines. Each catalog has grown progressively better, based on our experience.

Our first was a formidable project. While many of us had some training in

graphic arts, none of us had worked before in this particular form.

We set up a Newsletter Committee. Almost everyone became involved. Since the six other community schools had printed their catalogs using a Reneo 865 mimeograph, and printed on 8½ x 14" paper, folded in half, collated and stapled, we began by using the same format.

Our committee divided up responsibilities, one person writing two pages to introduce our school, explaining the concept of community education and inviting people to get involved; someone else volunteering to design a cover (it became two seagulls flying in front of the sun, two hands shaking, with a flowering plant growing from them, and the words "People Together" forming a border); another Council member writing a page on how to register for lessons; still another compiling a section on resources for senior citizens, called "Senior Power," and two others offering to gather and assemble a section on "Organizations and Services in Ocean Beach."

Finally, people sorting out the curriculum provided us with a list of classes and teachers and also a special session on "Seminars, Services, Workshops and One-time Special Events." We set aside a special section for our "After-School Enrichment Program" for elementary school children and a half page announcing the opening of our Child Development Center. Responsibility for these pages were delegated to people working in the particular areas.

Everyone had one week to do their writing and all were told to bring in any copy ready for typing as soon as it was written. We had two electric typewriters in the community at our disposal. From experience we knew that the best printing results could be obtained from copy typed on typewriters using carbon ribbons rather than cloth—this because cloth ribbons are used over and over while carbon ribbons are used only once and give a crisp, clear and even impression with each letter. You've seen newsletters that are hard to read because parts of the words have fallen away. This is probably because a poor cloth ribbon was used. This digression on a small technical detail is only because it can be really frustrating to spend time and energy on an article only to have it show up unreadable when printed.

Of course, if you have access to a large budget, you could send your copy out to a shop, to be typeset with justified straight right hand columns—a visually pleasing but expensive procedure.

Well, our budget was meager and our electric typewriters suited our needs quite well, so we set to work.

Before coming to the paste-up and layout phase, we made up a "dummy" from scrap paper—a drawn-up model of what we wanted our catalog to look

like, complete with page numbers and areas blocked out for each article or graphic. This permitted people to work on their respective sections while getting a sense of where they fitted into the product. It also let us know how much space was available for each subject.

As the typing came in, it was proof-read and corrected if necessary, then pasted on "flats"—sheets of paper measured to the size we wanted each catalog page to be—with rubber cement. We cut up the typed copy to fit the space, pasted it on, left room for graphics where needed, and carefully numbered each page (bottom left-hand corner for even-numbered pages, bottom right-hand corner for odd numbers).

Someone gave us a wonderful French Advertising book, filled with neat little illustrations suitable for graphic reproduction. Nancy Young, who also did our cover, was highly skilled in calligraphy and letters our headlines with beautiful characters. These we cut out and pasted in appropriate places.

There was a lot of discussion on how we should list our classes. There were two obvious options: By days of the week or by category (Crafts, Music, Sports, etc.). In our first catalog we chose to list by day of the week. Our centerfold then condensed all this information on one page—copy was printed horizontally—so the reader could determine at a glance which were the classes he wanted without having to page through the entire catalog. Later we changed to listing our classes by category, still maintaining our "At a Glance" page in which they are listed under day of the week.

The next step was to proof-read the flats again. The errors we found were circled with a light blue pencil, available at graphic art supply shops. We retyped the errors, taped in the corrections and made one more final check before we concluded we really had "camera-ready copy"—everything just as we wanted to see it in print!

Now we were ready to go to the Community Education Project Office. Here each sheet of copy was placed on an electric stencil scanner machine. Once our stencils were "burned," we loaded up our paper, using 16" canary bond with a slightly thicker paper for the cover, and fired up the mimeograph.

As the pages came off the press, a team of people worked till four in the morning, collating, stapling and folding the sheets, till our finished product, a funky little yellow brochure, was ready for distribution!

That same morning we were asked by the City Planning Department to include a voter registration announcement in each brochure, so after a little time off for sleep we returned to spend several hours—some new volunteers came in to help—stuffing the pre-printed sheets into each booklet.

Now we faced the problem of distribution. There were only a few days left to us before classes were to start. To be sure our material was thoroughly circulated, we used a map which divided each street by block numbers. As our neighbors began coming by to help distribute "their" catalogs, we had them sign up to "do their own block," and before long our catalogs were all out.

A few days later our newsletter committee met to critique our catalog. Page by page, we made specific suggestions on how to improve, including form, copy, layout and graphics as well as content. We suggested changes in text, omissions, additions, wording to make something clearer, etc. These suggestions were filed with other feedback from the community (letters, comments, etc.) for consideration when or next book was in process.

Our second issue was a purely informational Newsletter. No listing of classes, just people writing about what was going on in their community as they saw it. This one was printed on legal-size paper stapled together, it was produced by a committee at that time 24 members strong. It offered a report from the Council, Steve Kowit's poetry, profiles of some of our teachers, and letters. It also had a name: *Changing Tides*, chosen in an informal vote from among five alternative names listed for consideration on the blackboard in the community school office.

By the time we were ready to produce our next catalog we had a pretty good idea of what we wanted to see: A magazine-style journal that would include news, features, poetry, larger and better graphics, photos, not forgetting, of course, our listing of classes. We chose to issue it quarterly, corresponding to the seasonal beginnings of our class sessions.

Changing Tides acquired a very professional look when we began doing layout on larger flats, included photos, and added headlines using rub-on lettering (known in community ed circles as "cheaters"—they're available in graphic arts stores). We found a print-shop whose price was fair and once we were "camera ready" we brought our material there for publication.

About photos, there is this to remember: Only black and whites will do, and they must be "screened" or "half-toned" first. This is a process that recomposes the picture into tiny dots such as you see in newspaper photos. It is a simple procedure, done in most printshops with a large camera, which can also enlarge or reduce the prints.

The size we finally settled on is called a "flexi" in newspaper lingo. It is printed on newsprint, staple-stitched and trimmed, and costs less than when we printed it ourselves with the mimeo.

We were also able to afford color, in addition to black ink, on the front and

back covers and the two center pages. The time and energy saved was another bargain, since we did not have to fold or staple.

The new format worked so well that other San Diego community schools adopted it, too, and we have now negotiated a contract with the printer to do all our catalogs together, using the same ink colors, at a discount rate.

Our catalogs have included feature stories on longtime residents, issues affecting community planning, herbs, gardening, ways of criticizing, stories about life and death, news from the Public Library, Early Childhood Education, K-6 grades, PTA and listings of community organizations and services. We have also included Park and Recreation schedules and listings of classes available in other community schools.

You may find it helpful, as we did, to include a map of the school facility, as well as the rules and regulations developed to help us run smoothly.

From an initial printing of 6,000 catalogs we increased to 7,000, and our last two press runs have each been 10,000.

Catalogs are distributed through all neighboring elementary, junior high and high schools; in local places of business; the library, laundromats, private schools, agencies and nearby colleges. As an alternative to the block distribution system, which relies so much on volunteer time and energy, we've also experimented with mailing our brochures to every residence in O.B.—this, although effective, proved expensive.

We've found other ways of getting the word out. Posters distributed throughout town have announced the openings of new sessions and special events.

Press releases, Public Service announcements on radio, and classified ads in the papers have also told people about our programs.

These sheets from our Summer, 1977 catalog show the variety of courses we offer.

CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION Mimi Murray, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., Conf. Room 3, 6 weeks, $10.

Classes designed to prepare expectant parents physically, emotionally and intellectually for childbirth. Must be 6 months pregnant. Bring 2 pillows, one blanket, to class.

CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION American Red Cross, Thursday, June 23 & June 30, 6:30-10 p.m., Room 17, $3.

Life-saving techniques; combination of mouth-to-mouth and heart compression; theory and mannequin practice, Red Cross accreditation.

OPERATION PARACHUTE FOR YOUNG ADULTS Barbara Tinkess and Tina Quayle, Wednesday, 3-4 p.m., Learning Center, 6 weeks, no fee.

For young adults 17-21 years old. A self-help class for job hunters, based on the book *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Nelson Bolles. Make fun out of hard work by using creative exercises to explore and identify our unique values and skills; end up by drawing own personal job-hunting maps. We'll start at "Haphazardville" and end up at "Motivation City."

HONDA TUNE-UP CLINIC J. Brawn, a series of 3 Sunday workshops, July 3, July 24, August 14, at 4524 Cape May Avenue, fee $6 per workshop. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Students will learn to tune and maintain motorcycles. Bring owner/shop manuals, basic hand tools and new plugs and points. Reservations must be made at Community School office before first workshop date. Subjects of workshops are as follows: July 3, single-cylinder; July 24, twin-cylinder; August 14, four-cylinder.

SPANISH Martha Rehfuss, Monday and Thursday, 8-10 p.m., Room 15, 6 weeks, $12.

Conversational Spanish for travel and community use. Instructor has been teaching English classes in South American Literature as graduate student at SDSU.

COOKING NATURALLY WITH WHOLE FOODS Angie Myers, Tuesday, 9-12 a.m., Recreation Center Kitchen, 6 weeks, $12.

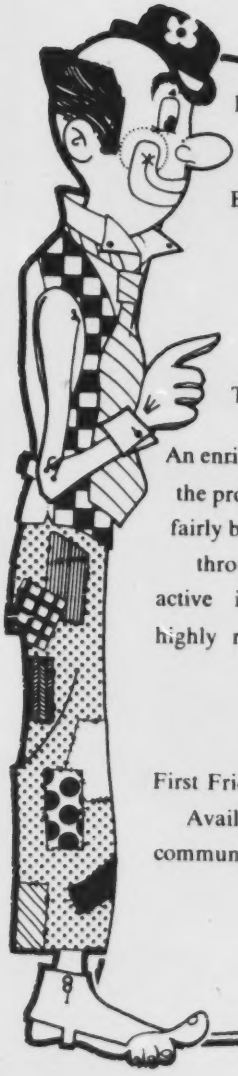
Course deals with whole foods, grains, legumes, sprouts, meatless entrees, soups, healthful desserts, and nutritional breakdown of important key foods in a vegetarian diet.

INTERNATIONAL SALADS Martha Rehfuss, Monday, 6:30-8 p.m., Recreation Center Kitchen, 6 weeks course, $6 plus cost of food.

Salads from many countries, including main dish and dessert salads. Instructor has experience as chef and instructor in French, Spanish and Peruvian cooking.

MEDITERRANEAN COOKING Martha Rehfuss, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., Recreaction Center Kitchen, 6 weeks, $6 plus cost of food and materials.

Learn to cook different types of Mediterranean foods, including main courses, desserts and array of appetizers and hot weather foods; many vegetable entrees.



BEGINNING ADULT BALLET Jane Schechter, Thursday, 4-5 p.m., Auditorium, 8 weeks, $10.

Beginning class in ballet, which allows student to become more aware of ballistic movements involving basic steps, theory and exercise.

BEGINNING ACTORS WORKSHOP

Daniel Holmes, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., Auditorium, 6 weeks, no fee.

An enrichment course designed to introduce the student to the processes of acting for the stage and incidentally to a fairly broad spectrum of dramatic literature and concepts through actual performance in class setting. Physically active in nature; leotards or loose-fitting clothing highly recommended.

JUGGLING & CIRCUS ARTS WORKSHOP

First Friday of each month, 7-9 p.m., Auditorium, no fee.

Available to persons over 16 years of age. A place in the community where people can practice juggling, acrobatics, tumbling, magic and other circus skills.

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CHAPTER SEVEN:

EVALUATION

"Community schools must, above all, be democratic institutions. Students and community members must be able to turn to local schools as good examples of democratic principles in practice."—British Columbia School Trustees Association.

The evaluation of a program or a process is in essence the art of judging what it is against what it could be. It plays an important and too often neglected role in the achievement of excellence. Unfortunately, it is not easy to reach.

To provide a truly good evaluation, one must first place on the evaluation

team persons who understand the goals and limitations of the school, but are not an integral part of the day-by-day operation.

These people must have a clear idea of the ideal (what the long-range goal would provide if no obstacles existed); the possible (the best that could be done under prevailing circumstances) and the actual (the program as it presently exists). They must then evaluate the gap between what is being done and the above goal definitions.

If the program and process, as evaluated, meet or come close to the possible goals, it is then time to take steps to provide whatever is needed (funding, space, personnel) to bring the possible and the ideal together.

This is not likely to happen in the first year of operation. Certainly it did not happen with us.

That our first evaluation process (see end-of-chapter pages) resulted in largely complimentary things being said seemed no doubt directly related to the fact that forms for evaluation were designed for and distributed to only the teaching staff and students of the community school, and were primarily addressed to the virtues or faults of the program. We did not at that time feel ready to reach out into the community to evaluate process or impact.

We are now working on an evaluation process that will set up an on-going committee, consisting for the most part of persons not directly connected with either school or council, but instead representing various segments of the public, including senior citizens and high school students. This committee would be chaired by some stable and fair-minded person from the community who would be chosen jointly by Principal and Council and who would then choose four or five other persons to complete the committee.

We hope we can conduct this evaluation so that the results will constitute a report to the community rather than the Board of Education. It is the community's opinion which is of primary importance to the Council.

Some of the things we have in mind for this process:

1. We will prepare a clear statement of the goals of community education in general and our Council in particular, and also a list of our short-term objectives for the period to be evaluated. We will give both lists to the committee members at least two weeks before their first meeting.

2. We will provide the committee with the evaluation forms filled out by students and teachers during the last few minutes of the last session of each quarter. To avoid the embarrassment for pupils or teachers, these unsigned forms will be picked up at the door by staff members.

3. We will provide the committee with all evaluations gathered from pe-

ripheral information on our latest needs assessment. Beginning in 1978, we hope our annual needs survey will be so constituted as to reveal:

a. general impression the person questioned has of the school's role in the community

b. personal involvement, if any

c. personal gratification received from involvement

d. frustrations experienced from this process

e. person's ideal of the role he or she and others might play in the community education process

4. We would furnish all pertinent notes kept by members of Council, staff and volunteers which might reveal attitudes and reactions to day-by-day operations; and we would encourage individual members of the Council to submit their ideas.

In addition, the name of the chairperson would be published in the newsletter and the local press, and the public would be invited to express its opinions.

Once the committee completes its evaluation, it would be asked to provide a comprehensive report on all aspects of its recommendations and to appear with these recommendations at a public meeting to be called by the Council. Other members of the community, in addition to the teaching staff from both the community school and the K-6 system, and representatives of the school district would be welcomed. Here we would discuss the evaluation results and discuss ways to improve in those areas in which improvement is indicated.

Although we anticipate a good report—we think we've done a good job—we do not intend to put this committee through long hours of work just to provide us with a pat on the back. We are looking for the truth, even if it hurts.

We intend to use the evaluation results to change our procedures where they need changing, deepen our commitments in areas where they are found lacking, and in general bring our community school and our Council as close to the ideal as we can do it.

You, of course, will want to do the same. To get you started, we are attaching some evaluation forms we have found useful.

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE (TO STUDENTS ATTENDING SPRING SESSION, OCEAN BEACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL) June, 1977

You, as one of the enrollees in the spring session of the Ocean Beach Community School program, have been selected at random to help us evaluate our efforts. Please answer the following questions and return the questionnaire to us in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible. Thank you.

Name _____

Tel. No. _____

Age group: _____18-25 _____26-35 _____36-45 _____46-55 _____56 and over

Class (classes attended):

1. Name of Class _____ Teacher _____
   Location _____ Time _____ Fee _____
2. Name of Class _____ Teacher _____
   Location _____ Time _____ Fee _____

If more than one class, please indicate (1) or (2) in your answers below:

Evaluation of Class: Excellent_____ Good_____ Fair_____ Poor_____

Was the class: Very profitable to you_____
Somewhat profitable_____
Not particularly profitable_____
A waste of time_____

If your answers were "not particularly profitable" or "waste of time," please state reasons you think apply:

Teacher disinterested_____
Class not well organized_____
Contents of class did not match catalog_____
Not enough students to make it interesting_____
Fee too high_____

How, in your opinion, could the class be improved? _____

Do you have any general suggestions to improve conditions or environment at the Community School for next session? _____

Do you plan to attend summer classes?_____ Fall?_____

Do you have any suggestions for classes not currently listed in our catalog?___

Would you care to join the Community School Council? There is no charge for membership; your attendance would be welcome. If you check "Yes," below, you will be notified of meeting date.

I would like to become active in the Council: _____ _____ _____
Yes Not Now No

COMMUNITY SCHOOL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

June, 1977 **Ocean Beach Elementary-Community School**

This questionnaire is being sent to all persons who taught a class or classes in the spring session. Please answer the questions and return the questionnaire in t e enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope at your earliest convenience.

1. Name _____ Name of class _____
   Room_____ Fee (if any)_____ Were you paid? Yes_____ No_____
2. Enrollment: How many attended opening session?_____
   How many actually enrolled?_____ What was average attendance?_____
3. In most classes, attendance dropped considerably during the last six weeks. If yours was such a class, please check which of the following reasons you think would apply:
   a. physical conditions: Location of room_____ lighting_____ seating_____
   b. time conflict with _____
   c. lack of sustained interest because _____
   d. other _____
4. Did you, as a teacher, enjoy your class? Yes_____ No_____

   If the answer is no, why not?_____
   _____
5. If the class is offered again, what changes should be made in:
   a. catalog description _____
   b. room assignment _____
   c. time_____ fee_____
   d. other _____
6. Would you teach the class again? Yes_____ No_____
   If not, check which reasons might apply:
   a. compensation not adequate_____
   b. not sufficient interest in subject_____
   c. lack of time on your part_____
   d. other _____

Thank you for your help. We hope you will be back with us for summer or fall session.

THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

CHAPTER EIGHT:

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE SPECIALIST

by
Denny Doyle

Someone recently said it would probably take another Jesus Christ to meet the job description of a Community School Specialist and I think that's a pretty accurate statement. I know I could never do all of the things called for in this job—I'd go crazy! Whenever anyone asks me anything now, for example if

someone wants to borrow my car, I jokingly say, "Sure, that's in my job description" and the job is so extensive that whatever they're requesting, it's probably covered in there somewhere. What it all boils down to is that you're supposed to be everything to everybody.

Here's some examples from an official job description. Take a look and you'll see what I mean:

Conducts surveys and interviews in the community and among school staff to identify community needs; seeks supplementary funds, resources, and facilities that could be used in developing and expanding programs to meet community needs and the school's instructional programs; represents the school at meetings of community organizations and provides information and leadership for new activities; coordinates community education program.. conducted at the school site during and after school hours; may select and train aides, helpers, and other non-certificated staff; works cooperatively with existing public and private agencies to develop improved communications among community groups, service organizations, and schools; assists in evaluating community programs . . .

Quite a bit to expect, eh? Then there's the tasks of the Community School Council. Here are some items from a list developed by one council:

Conduct, with resident assistance, a community needs assessment; develop a list of priorities based upon needs, wants, and problems; make recommendations relative to program development; determine a scheme for evaluating progress; develop a system for community-school communication to promote publicity of existing programs; promote activities for children and adults—the total community; coordinate community services and activities; develop a community resource index and program; encourage and provide special programs.

As you can see there's quite a bit of overlap there between what the Council does and what the Specialist does. Compound this with the complications that arise when the Council develops the Community School from the grassroots up and hires the Specialist with different expectations than the School District has had for the job and you'll get some idea of what a difficult position Alan Someck and I were in when we first set out to do this job—splitting the position so that we could each work half time!

Of course it wasn't made any easier by the fact that we were excluded from regular school staff meetings, that we weren't permitted to hold a workshop to explain Community Ed to the K-6 instructional staff, who had no basis for trusting us, and that we had a principal who would not attend our council meetings or call meetings of the other school committees. This situation was to gradually change.

Then there was the head custodian who blamed everything that went wrong or that he couldn't find on us, the school secretary who wouldn't give the Community School phone number out when people called the school's front office (we didn't get our phone til after the new phone book was printed so we sort of had an unlisted number) and then there were our very own Council members some of whom had lingering feelings that came out of dissatisfaction with what went on in the hiring process (though not with Alan and I personally) and most of whom felt that whenever no one wanted to do a task it was the paid staff's responsibility.

So there we were stuck with the dirty work, assuming a leadership role, responsible to the School District which dealt with us in a top down manner, accountable to the Council which saw us advocating on their behalf on the District level, and trying to do all that's involved in developing a good program. At times it seemed like everyone was our boss--everybody always wanted something: "Why hadn't the staff called the Council membership list to remind them of the meeting?" *(But wasn't that the responsibility of the chair and secretary?);* "The staff has formed a power block and are making decisions independently." *(But we're supposed to be making these decisions, planning and implementing projects, ordering materials and supplies).* The Council was used to making decisions unilaterally, the District was used to telling people what to do, and we weren't used to taking orders from anybody.

Our allegiance was truly with our Council but the basis for trust wasn't fully there. After all, we were now being paid by the very system that had seemed so unreceptive to our efforts heretofore. Would the good guys with the white hats turn into the ugly villains and become a part of the bureaucracy or would they courageously fight the system and show their true loyalty? Our assignment, which we'd already accepted, was to challenge the status quo and struggle for decentralizing decision-making by bringing it down to a local grassroots level (without the tape self-destructing and both of us getting fired in the process).

We started out, quite literally, in an empty bare room--bare floor bare walls--nothing. We bought some old wooden office desks that Linda Taggart sanded and varnished, and a file cabinet and some chairs. We formed a room decoration committee and painted the room in a light shade of blue. Katie found an old rug that could be mended, Art offered to reupholster a couple of understuffed chairs that someone had found in an alley, and Jim Sparks, who was going to be our photography teacher, brought some photos for the walls.

There, that felt better. Now we had a space to work out of. So we went ahead and ordered supplies to put in our space: pens, pencils, sharpeners, rulers,

paper (and clips), a typewriter, rubber bands, etc.

Then the complaints started: Weren't we supposed to get those expenses approved by the council's finance committee, why weren't we involving people in the decisions on how to spend these funds? *(But these funds were allocated from the District's budget so that we could do the job we were paid to do, weren't they? Whatta ya waanus tado, we seemed to be asking the council, get permission every time we need a paperclip?)* Alas, we ended up at the next Council meeting working it all out: yes, the staff should feel free to order the supplies it needs for day-to-day operation of the school.

Whew! For a minute there . . . well, ok, we were back on track, let's get to work. We had no phone in our room and the principal recommended we use the phone across the hall in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) office till we got our own. Sure enough, someone from ECE complained that we had taken over the ECE room and were using the phone without permission. So we had to straighten that one out.

Since we were not connected to the front office of the K-6 program (no telephone extension, intercom system, etc.) and since we couldn't use that office after school and in the evenings we had to function as virtually a separate school. People complained they had a hard time reaching us so the Council felt it would be wise for us to staff our office all day. We opened at 10 am and closed at 10 pm and with three of us supposedly working half-time (Nancy Young also worked on the staff for a brief time but she edited the newsletter from her home and wasn't involved in office responsibilities) it took almost all of our energy just to keep the office staffed; answering phones, responding to correspondence, handling inquiries from people who dropped by, running off dittoes, talking to teachers, tabulating needs assessments, and trying to keep sane! If the three of us had worked only the hours we were supposed to work and if we kept the office open during all of the hours it was scheduled to be open we would never have seen each other to coordinate what we were doing. So it was obvious we were going to have to put in more hours than we were paid for. There was no money in the limited budget to pay for overtime because then we would have had nothing for paper clips, ditto masters, paper, etc. So we became unwittingly some of the school's most committed volunteers with each of us often working more than 60 hours a week just to keep the office staffed, the meetings going, the classes serviced and to get things rolling. *(Hey, what is this, I was only looking for a part time job, remember!)*

So while School District officials boasted about all of the work these fine employees were doing to make their program a success and while some commu-

nity people were complaining that we weren't doing enough, (*Shouldn't you be strengthening our after-school program?,*" "*Why aren't you out in the community spreading the word more?,*" "*We need activities for seniors.*" "*What are you doing for jr. high kids, etc?*"), we were taking to closing the office early on Fridays and holding our staff meetings at the Pacific Shores bar over tequila sunrises just to cope with the pressures.

"It doesn't seem to matter that my personsl life is shot," I complained to Alan, "that my son doesn't remember me, and that I don't have any time to think about what I'm doing. Now I find myself having a close personal relationship with the Community School concept and processes and I don't even have the time to enjoy it."

"I know," Alan muttered bleary-eyed, "there must be a better way of doing this."

Well, optimism reigned and with the lure of those Pacific Shores staff meetings we managed to make it through each week.

This is not to say we didn't have help, who knows what would've happened if people didn't volunteer, but something always seemed to come up as it does with volunteers (the kids needed to go to swimming lessons, their schedule changed, they forgot), and when it came down to it, it came down on us.

The pressures and frustrations built and before long they reached their peak. It finally happened at a Council meeting a few months after we were on the job. Someone said something offhandedly like, "That should be the staff's responsibility," and I exploded. Before I realized it I was on my feet yelling like a madman.

"Do you know how many hours I work each week, do you have any idea what I do all day? And for what, it's not the money I can tell you that. I made more when I was a clerk in a grocery store during summer vacations from school. There's no gratitude in this job, I can tell you that. Everybody wants something, that's for sure. But most of my hours here are volunteer time, nobody seems to appreciate that. Why, this job doesn't demand commitment, it wants your life blood that's what it wants."

"Ok, ok, I'm sorry I blew up but I've been trying to tell you this for a while now and nobody seemed to be listening. We can't continue this way. We can't carry out the Council's decisions and organize the Council and administer the program all at the same time. If we're to represent the Council's will and cause its resolutions to become reality then the Council's going to have to take some responsibility to build itself as a self-perpetuating body and work with us. We can't do everything. Sometimes we're going in so many different directions that

we can't do anything."

(How can you be in two places at once when, in the context of the whole school, you're not anywhere at all, eh?).

Well, by and large those folks were pretty responsive. They liked us, I mean we came from their camp, didn't we? And they could see the pressure was getting to us and we all had to change. It was encouraging.

We agreed to set up a task force to work out a structure for the Council and the staff. Yes, our "Structures" committee met many times and eight of us got busy getting things together. We brainstormed all the tasks that needed to be done, figured out whose responsibility each task was and came up with an absolutely wonderful plan that would streamline the bulky set of committees we had. It was our hope that the staff would work more closely with this new committee structure and theoretically the Council and the staff would pull together and we'd all be just one big happy family (ah, nirvana).

But alas, it didn't turn out as it appeared in black and white.

What went wrong, you ask. Ah, well, just a few minor technicalities. For one, some of the people who were most critical of the staff's roles in the school typically didn't show up at meetings of the structures task force even though they were specifically invited to participate. They didn't like the plan all that much either.

And for two, the Council plunged head first into an all out war with the principal before we ever had a chance to establish our wonderful structures.

There were many reasons for people to be discouraged. The almost total lack of cooperation we got, the seeming denial of our existence, and the harsh reality that many avenues for significant parent/community involvement were closed off caused people to be righteously upset and we knew we had to stand up for our rights.

But at the same time we were falling into a pattern. It seemed like we were always working in the midst of crisis, responding to situations without actually getting ourselves together first and taking the initiative, calling the shots, as it were, and strategizing how we could get what we needed.

Jimmy the Greek would've had a hard time figuring out odds on what the outcome of these battles would be. We made out alright, I guess, but the war was costly. Before a cease-fire was called we were involved in petition drives, special council sessions, and a presentation on the situation to the board of education.

Alan and I frequently found ourselves on the front lines where there was little we could do realistically to change things.

This frustrated our Council and when they tried to flex their muscles as citi-

zens they learned a difficult lesson: The system was even less likely to respond to such visible public citizen pressure under the circumstances.

So it wasn't until the summer that the stalemate was broken and some things began to happen quietly behind the scenes that ended up producing a more cooperative principal in the fall.

By then many of our Council people were burned out, attendance at meetings had dipped, and Alan and I were exhausted. Since our structure never became a reality Alan and I ended up doing a lot of the tasks by ourselves that we'd hoped we could do by working with committees. We still hadn't gotten off the double shift.

So what else is new, right? But we were appreciated, that's one thing I can say. People who took our classes were very responsive. Alan and I tried to drop-in to every class each night to share information, pass out leaflets, and answer questions. And we represented well the positions of the people we worked with.

And through our efforts and the hard work of people who contributed to and supported the program, the Community School earned respect and prestige in the community.

That first summer we made some terrific leaps forward. I worked on involving many of our community people in the K-6 program by setting up the mini-classes during summer school. Alan brought together representatives from our school's various organizations (like Joan Betteridge and Pat Warren) to work on establishing a Listening Center where children would be counseled and individual attention provided as an alternative to traditional disciplining.

We had numerous meetings with members of our PTA executive board where we tried to unravel the binds that miscommunication had caused. We began working actively with our new PTA president, Lois Fleming, and her participation and open-mindedness somehow represented a breakthrough that was to earn us acceptance within the school community and a greater degree of integration of the Community education concept with the workings of the whole school.

Also that summer, one particularly hostile custodian retired early, the head custodian transferred to another school, and we welcomed J. C. Broadhead, his replacement, who really liked what we were doing. And a new secretary, Alice Cross, was assigned to work in the front office and she's been really helpful and pleasant—even willingly gives out our phone number.

By the time the elementary education program was ready to resume in the fall, there was a whole different feeling around the school. Alan and I and our

dedicated council members had worked hard over the summer to make inroads and gain more support for community education and we reported on our progress to the community.

But there was still a great deal of uncertainty around what the new school year would bring. The principal was back on site, children filled the rooms during the day, teachers resumed their instructional duties and our classes packed the rooms in the evenings. Yet beneath the surface smoke still fumed from the bitterness that lingered on from the strife of the previous school year.

Still, there seemed to be a more positive attitude developing and it seemed only a matter of time before some specific problems would be resolved and better working relationships would fall into place in the school.

So it was with some anticipation that we called a special Council meeting to get things in order. The principal was invited as was the District Director, Dr. Craig, and more than 30 people attended what might've been our best Council meeting ever.

It was a humble principal who stood before us that day and admitted that much of the way he had acted over the past year was out of fear of the unknown. He had come to respect our effort, he said, and in describing himself as "an apprehensive and unconvinced principal" during the last year, he promised to cooperate fully throughout the new school year.

"I will attend your Council meetings," he said earnestly, "and every committee in our school will meet as it's supposed to."

He turned to Katie and asked her to help him call a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, the first in nearly a year. They would begin making arrangements for elections for a new board for the coming year.

We were also assured that the ECE committee and all of its sub-committees would meet regularly throughout the school year because the District had assigned an ECE coordinator to work with us.

The principal then went on to tell us that the Specialists would be welcome to attend staff meetings and that we were invited to hold a workshop to explain community education to the K-6 teachers, that some means would be worked out to tie the school's two offices together, and that a Communications Committee would be set up to bring the school's divergent groupings together as a means of working more cooperatively.

There was a sigh of relief from everyone present followed by a wait-and-see attitude. We all wanted to be true believers but it was hard to break out of the conditioned skepticism that we'd learned from disappointments with the many promises we'd heard before.

But what the heck, there wasn't much more we could do other than to trust the guy. And he proceeded along steering a straight course to the end of the school year.

Meetings were called fairly regularly and they came off pretty mechanically. It wasn't like there was suddenly a terrific amount of enthusiasm but on the other hand there weren't any obstacles either—and that's all we really needed. Things were run pretty much by the book. So now it was up to us to make the most of it, to get involved and have the kind of impact we wanted to have through the mechanisms we'd finally opened up

Our Council members flocked to join the ECE Committee and get involved in its subcommittees. But somehow, with the new ECE coordinator assuming responsibility for the program, administrative inertia seemed to outweigh citizen initiative.

Many of our Community School Council members and supporters ran and won in the CAC election and as the CAC sunk its teeth into school lunch and nutrition, the safety problems on Santa Monica St., and school desegregation, our Community School Council seemed to lose its orientation for a time. There are many reasons for this. First there were overlapping areas of responsibility between the Council and the CAC. In many Community Schools these two have been merged into one body but our Communications Committee had only begun to work on this problem. Then there were the sheer number of meetings that were called. Many of our Council members are also involved in CAC, the Communications Committee, PTA and ECE as well as serving on District-level Advisory Committees. So running around to meetings almost daily and dealing with many of the same issues continually got to be very draining for some people. So the Council began to meet less often.

Another reason for the Council's need for a new direction was the role the Council was forced to play during the first tumultuous year of its existence. With all avenues for having an impact on the school either closed or suspended, the Council was, in a sense, forced to play the role of an adversary force, an organization that frequently needed to be militant in its demands and uncompromising in its insistence on upholding the rights it recognized. But this placed the Council in the role of a radical, fighting group that, in a sense was true, but in another sense was not as true as its popular stereotype implied.

In any event, the Council succeeded in getting recognition as a significant working group and in the process it forced open other channels in the school for citizen involvement. But it never shook its early image and for new people who hadn't been involved in its struggles, there remained a stigma and they were re-

luctant to get involved. So as some Council members went to work in other areas of the school, the question of what role the Council would play in a practical sense emerged. I guess in some respects it would be fair to say that overall the Council has been successful in accomplishing its goals up to this point. But on the other hand, there are some Council people who simply aren't interested in getting involved in elementary education nor are they serving on the elected CAC board. For them the Council has been a place to plug in whenever they wish to be involved and it provides them with a means of participating as equal voting members in areas they are particularly concerned with.

So it's also probably fair to say that we might've let some of those folks down by having fewer meetings and thereby depriving them of an adequate structure that put a value on their access to direct participation.

We're currently working on developing an organizational model for the coming school year that will incorporate all existing school groups, be accessible to everyone, and at the same time represent each area our Community School is concerned with.

And what became of our two Community Services Specialists? Well, we had an easier time of it, that's for sure. Our work earned us the respect of the teachers, parents, children, and the larger community.

Our workshop with the K-6 staff was very encouraging and it brought out a number of needs the teachers perceived existed within the school.

We brought in a consultant to do woodworking with the young children, increased the numbers of people volunteering in the classrooms, and helped bring the Listening Center into being. We worked on setting up parent education classes and in-service training for teachers.

I worked on a multi-cultural art project for the ECE program while Alan and Alice Rogow, our volunteer coordinator, expanded the mini-classes and established them as an ongoing aspect of the K-6 instructional program.

It wasn't long before the elementary level teachers began coming to us seeking resources: Could we get scholarships so that more of the children could go to camp? Are there ways we could get the Big Brother program more involved with our kids? Can we start an "adopt a grandparent" project? etc.

And the kids came to us: Would we help them find solutions to the bike theft problem? Could we mediate a misunderstanding with a teacher or fellow classmate? Work with the student council? etc.

We also tapped outside funding sources that are available for job training to create paid positions for seniors and high school students to work as classroom aides, with our custodial crew, and as staff workers in our office. *(Whew,*

we finally were able to get down to putting in some reasonable hours!).

In January we obtained a permit to close off Santa Monica Street to hold an all day Community Education Street Fair. Each organization in our school and many from the larger community set up tables with materials explaining their organization's purpose. Groups served sandwiches and baked goods, and we had performances by people from our classes: poetry, juggling, folk music, karate, belly dancing, etc. Other classes set up displays illustrating the things that were going on in their learning sessions and hundreds of people attended throughout the day.

In many ways this event symbolized a unity between the school and the community that most of us would never have dreamed of accomplishing in one short year.

There were other high points during the year too. Like when we received a thank you card from a member of the PTA Executive Board for helping set up the auditorium for Founder's Day. Or when the hiring committee became a permanent standing committee for the school (to hire classroom aides, counseling center coordinator, etc.). Probably one of the best aspects of the job for me has been the person-to-person contact I've had with so many people in so many different situations: Some of the neediest people whose needs won't necessarily turn up on a needs assessment analysis; people unemployed; people lonely; people depressed; people with drug or alcohol problems; people with legal dilemmas; people isolated and alienated and trying to cope with the stress and pressures they must face everyday in our fast-paced, faceless society; people just trying to get by; people looking for a little hope, for some light at the end of the tunnel; people in the bars at night, circling want ads in the coffee shops in the mornings; people hangin' out, people oppressed and struggling.

These are the people to stay in touch with, I think, folks who won't necessarily cross the moat but whose needs are pressing and urgent nonetheless.

I guess I'm suggesting that my experiences indicate that the job description for the Community School Specialist be expanded, as if there weren't enough in there already, right? You've also got to be a facilitator, a mediator, a counselor, and most importantly, a friend.

I'm also suggesting that the scope of what we're dealing with in Community Ed be consciously expanded beyond the school per se, that in a very real way, the community be viewed as the classroom.

This, of course, implies a new definition of both community and education. In a nutshell it means that we willingly experience learning as a never-ending process, that from birth to death we are constantly sharing with each other and

actively growing together.

I've seen glimpses of this when people of all ages have joined hands for a singalong or in creative writing, karate, and other classes where human beings from 10 years old to 70 sharpen their skills with each other and age plays no real factor, or when elementary school children happily tell me, "I'm in room 17 and my mom goes to room 15." These are the experiences that feed visions.

On the other hand, I think community education assumes a rather idealistic notion at times by acting as if there are enough resources *available* to meet people's needs, that it's simply a matter of matching resources to needs.

Let's face it, we do not live in an egalitarian society. We are subject to a superstructure: institutions and their limitations, political forces, and the means by which wealth, status, and privilege are perpetuated. And Community Education functions within that context. Certainly our commitment to a philosophy of Community Education—participatory democracy, meeting people's needs, decentralized decision making, etc.—demands that we work to remold a society where we will not be bound by such restrictive parameters.

But I don't believe this can be accomplished within a community education movement alone. It will take a great many dedicated people working on many levels for a long period of time before we even begin to see the kind of results that would do justice to the process that community education can become.

So, while I don't believe Community Schools are a panacea for all the problems people are confronted with in their lives, I do think they are a valuable resource that offers a trusting and caring environment where people can experience having real control over many areas that affect their lives.

As for Alan and I, after two years of hard work, we are now preparing to leave our positions as coordinators of this school. We had hoped from the beginning that these jobs would be rotated periodically among different qualified people in our community so that leadership may be shared in the same way that terms of office are treated. We'll both continue to be involved in our school's affairs and we'll take the skills we've acquired into other areas we'll be working in.

As Alan wrote in the latest issue of *Changing Tides*, "We both have always felt that the job should be an opportunity for different people to have as the school develops and changes. This relates to the belief that the Community School process will hopefully never depend on particular people to carry it out, but rather can be flexible and grow with a variety of creative and open energies from different people. It is now time for new energy to expand the ideas and practice of community education in Ocean Beach."

At the same time our principal is leaving to work at another school. He, Alan and I have been reflecting on all that has happened during the time of our association together.

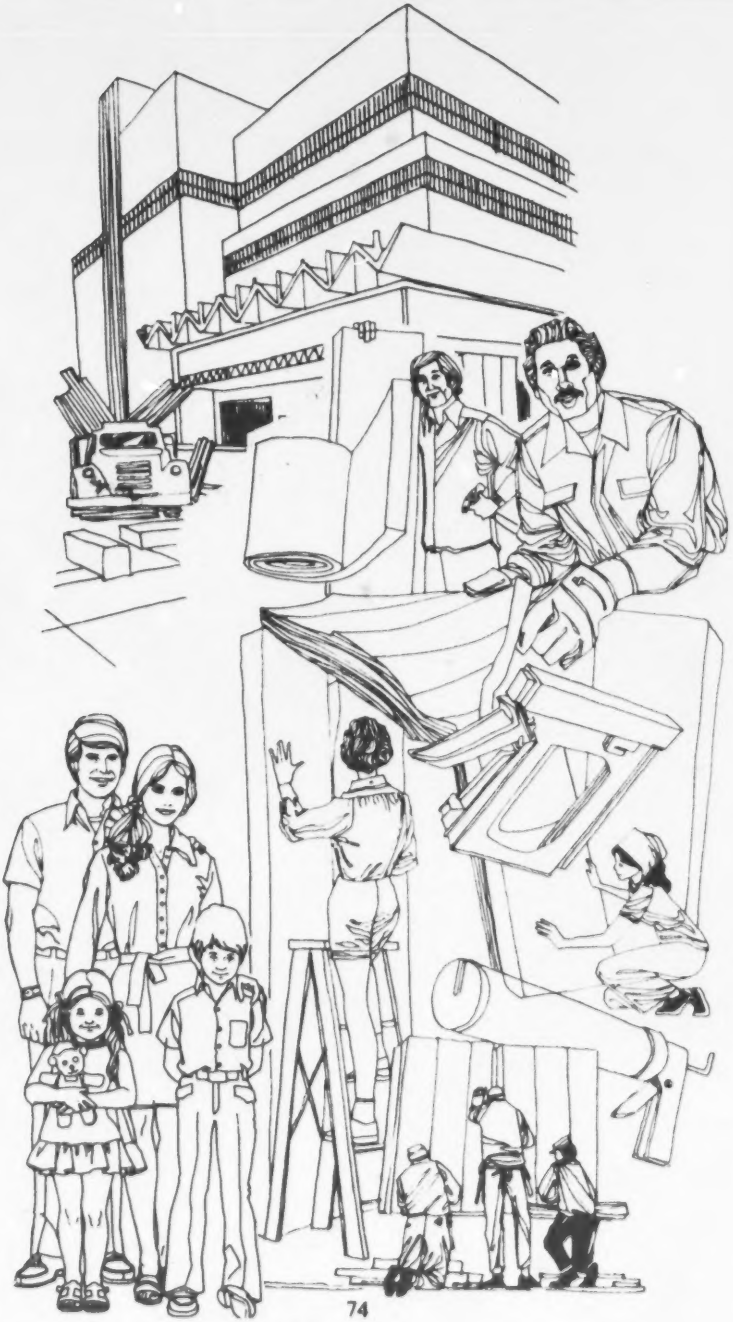
In retrospect we all have pretty good feelings about what has been accomplished. And each of us feels good about choosing to leave at this time. While there were admittedly some difficult periods in the development of our whole school as a community school, we did manage to create a wonderful community school; all of us—the specialists, the council members, the PTA, the parents and children, the K-6 staff and the principal—because we all changed. And that, after all is what Community Education is really about: change.

And change usually involves a lot of hard work—and it's never easy if it's meaningful. Of course our situation was particularly unusual in many respects, but those of you who will be changing your elementary schools into Community Schools are not likely to face the same difficulties. After all, when you mix two new programs (ECE and Community Education) with a new principal and a community that's strongly polarized, there's bound to be many breakdowns in communication which will produce some incredible dilemmas. Your situation will no doubt be less complicated.

If we had it to do over again I'm sure we could think of a million things we'd do differently. But in a very real way we actually needed to represent the different forces that were necessary in playing out the changes in our particular situation which evolved all of us to a new level both as a school and as a community.

You too may be confronted with some obstacles but don't back down from the challenges you'll find along the road. Remember that support and understanding form the principal and K-6 staff are crucial to success. Be sensitive to conflicts that may develop and clarify responsibilities in a non-accusatory way. Be patient with the newness of it all, and always try to involve as many people as possible in the decision-making process.

Your Council has a vital role to play in your community school and your coordinator has a hard job to do. It is only through the process of finding ways of working together, as we have done, that you will find yourselves successful in your endeavors to enrich your community.



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CHAPTER NINE:

MAINTAINING OUR TIES IN THE COMMUNITY

By now you must have guessed that we who write this book have an unabashed love for Ocean Beach.

We are also proud of our community school, but we know that much more work than we have yet expended still lies ahead. What has been established

must now be maintained. Although programs may flourish, the process itself erodes quickly unless we pay the price—eternal vigilance.

A new Council, embracing all school-related committees and extending a cordial invitation to all local service and action groups to participate, will debut this fall. We must continue to keep it fluid and open-ended. It is important to comb diligently the lists of newcomers and nearly-retired, hoping to find many who will work with us; at the same time, we should permit persons who have already completed herculean tasks in our behalf to take informal leave for short periods without feeling guilty.

Every organization in O.B. should have representation on the new Council. But we must keep a place, too, for the unaffiliated person who comes to us with one particular problem in mind; and for those footloose but creative persons who, passing through O.B., are willing for the time of their visit to share their energy and ideas with us.

The Council must continue to make itself visible in the community, not merely as a purveyor of programs, but as a potential solver of problems.

On the other hand, we should not be perturbed if certain groups—for religious, social or political reasons—prefer to operate independently. We can offer our umbrella to all who need it, but we are not, and should never appear to be, in competition with organizations which have found other ways to keep the raindrops from falling on their heads. The drama group sponsored by the school is important. As we write this, it is presenting Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a free summer weekend entertainment. But drama clubs may spring up in other places, churches, singles clubs, even in tents; and they are of equal importance. We must remember that it is this very surge of creativeness, like mushrooms springing up all over, that the community school concept is intended to induce.

Likewise, if the local library, which has some really neat people in it, chooses to give a poetry reading or a guitar recital, we should support it—as we have in the past—and arrange our own activities so as not to compete. All activity for our community's betterment should be welcomed and unhesitantly supported, whatever the source. Ask not by whom the bell tolls; answer it and give your tied-up paper and stepped-on aluminum to whatever local charity may stand on your doorstep!

In the previous chapter, Denny Doyle spoke of the importance of maintaining personal contact with all segments of the community. We should all make a point of doing this. The members of the original Council have a very special task here. For the past year we have worked very closely and what spare time we had was to a great extent enjoyed together. Now it is time to return to the segments

of the community from which we came, and renew and expand our contacts there. When we come together, at Council meetings and elsewhere, we should not behave clannishly as "old Council" members, but meet as friends who love and trust each other but are no longer compelled to hold completely identical viewpoints.

In this way—by becoming separate individuals again—we can resist the tendency, inherent in any organization, to think of ourselves as separate from the people we serve. That way lie the powers and perils of bureaucracy. Once we think of ourselves as "here" and the rest of the community as "out there," we have taken a dangerous shovel in hand. Mean to or not, we have begun to re-dig the moat!

"We're meeting the needs
of the people."